

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES



To the Residents of Allen County,

On March 27, 2019 a public meeting was held by the Allen County Public Library's Board of Trustees. The purpose of the meeting was to address concerns over how the ACPL's collection is being managed.

Prior to said meeting, a set of questions was submitted by concerned citizens. During the course of the meeting, the Board addressed those questions which fell within the scope of the meeting's topic: Collection Management.

The following are included with this document:

- Responses delivered at the March 27, 2019 public meeting;
- Responses to questions that had been submitted prior to the March 27, 2019 public meeting, but were not addressed because they did not fall within the scope of the meeting;
- Responses to questions asked at the March 27, 2019 public meeting;

Responses to questions that were submitted to Trustees@acpl.info by the April 3, 2019 deadline.

The vast majority of the questions submitted relate to the inner workings of the Library. As board members, we are aware that while we are charged with providing oversight and governance of the institution, we ourselves are not library professionals. Because of that reality, we relied on the input of library staff and subject matter experts to assist in developing responses to questions outside our personal experiences and range of knowledge.

The Board of Trustees and the Library's Director are aware of the public's interest in and concerns surrounding the various issues addressed in the following questions and responses. We too, all hold our library in high esteem. As a group, we are committed to honoring the legacy of this institution, while at the same time addressing the challenges presented by the modern era that are common to libraries across the country – including ours.

We remain attentive, interested and aware of the public's concerns. In the spirit of transparency, and open communication, the Board will continue to receive and review public comments through our email address at Trustees@acpl.info.

Respectfully,

Board of Trustees
Allen County Public Library



SECTION 1

ACPL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**RESPONSES SHARED AT THE
MARCH 27, 2019
PUBLIC MEETING**



PETITIONER'S QUESTIONS

1. QUESTION:

What was the total number of books in the collection in 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017?

What was the total number of books discarded from the collection in each of those years?

ANSWER:

It is not accurate that 1.4 million books have been removed from the collection. Due to years of inaccurate data and the lack of any physical inventories ever being conducted, we cannot determine how many books were removed. We have learned during this process that incorrect data has been reported to the State for years, which continued to build on itself and impact reporting year after year. That inaccurate data is the source of the Petitioners concerns.

We have discovered that at various times items were counted that shouldn't have been, such as e-books, lost items, missing items, and dummy items.

Until late 2018, the Library had a practice of creating a dummy item when a title was ordered. The dummy item was not deleted after the real items were received. Because of this, under each record there was a "ghost" item. In 2018, 33,818 titles were ordered. That resulted in the same number of dummy items in the catalog. If this occurs year after year, it makes your collection appear to be much larger than it actually is.

To the question of how many books were discarded in each of those years between 2014-2017, our current system does not differentiate between actual items discarded and simple records that were deleted for various reasons. The answer to the next question will provide more context for this response.

In regards to the inaccurate data, for the first time ever, physical inventories were conducted at each of the branches in 2018 and staff are just finishing the inventory of the Main Library.

Because of that inventory, we now know that our collection includes 2.4 million print books. This does not include other non-print items in the collection.

It is also important to note that over a three-year period, more than 300 thousand physical books were added to the collection.

2. QUESTION:

Has that report been generated? If not, please do so and provide us with that number.

ANSWER:

To provide context for this question, the Petitioners are claiming that 10,000 books were discarded per week in 2018. They have asked for a report that verifies or disputes that number.

The figure of 10,000 books per week discarded is not accurate. It is not physically possible for library staff to discard this many physical items in a week's time.

We also need to take a step back from the idea of that everything removed from the system was a book, or even a physical item. These numbers can also represent catalog records which are merely computer entries. The discarding process does not just involve removing books from shelves. The item could be a book, CD, DVD, audiobook, magazine, puzzle, or board game – any item in our collection.

If a book is removed from the collection because it's not circulating, then its item record is removed from the catalog and marked as Discarded in the system.

If a book is removed because it's grubby and dirty, its item record is removed from the catalog and marked as Discarded in the system.

If an item is lost, missing, or stolen, its record is removed from the catalog and marked as Discarded in the system.

If an item is damaged, its record is removed from the catalog and marked as Discarded in the system.

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One of the shortcomings of the Library's current tracking system, which has been in use since 1998, is that it doesn't distinguish between the different reasons why an item is discarded. Once the Library moves to its new system in July, it will require staff to indicate exactly why an item is being discarded, which will allow library professionals the ability to run reports by discard category. For example, we will be able to tell how many items were stolen in a particular timeframe.

People would probably be surprised at how many items are removed from the collection for reasons that have nothing to do with weeding. Since the February 28 board meeting, library staff have not discarded physical items. During this time period, a report was run to determine how many catalog records were removed from the system. In one week, that report showed 8,000 catalog records had their status automatically changed from Missing & Not Found to Discard. The next week, the report showed 11,000 records had been Discarded. That is almost 20,000 item records removed from the catalog that weren't attached to a SINGLE physical item in the Library's possession. In other words, 20,000 records were removed that had nothing to do with weeding.

Records show 242,533 catalog records were removed from the system in 2018. That averages 4,664 a week. That is less than half the number that has been claimed. Remember, those numbers do not all represent books being discarded, or even physical items. Those also include catalog records for lost, stolen, damaged, and missing items, as well as duplicate records.

3. Question:

As an important procedure that defined our collection, both internally and externally, why not continue the last copy procedure? Why remove ACPL's vital role in the interlibrary loan network? What is the value or end goal in doing away with last copy procedure?

Answer:

The concept of a "last copy" means the library would hold onto the very last copy of a book to preserve its availability to the public. However, keeping the last copy has never been a policy at ACPL, and there is no written record that it was ever an official procedure. If this happened in our past, keeping the last copy of an item was a practice, not an official operating policy. This is an important distinction. Policy is written down, reviewed by senior staff, and must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Procedures are written down and reviewed and approved by senior staff.

Last copy might best be described as an aspirational philosophy that was passed down through oral tradition. But it was never tracked, nor was it codified in a formal way. Importantly, it has not been practiced consistently throughout the system. There are staff members in various departments and locations who have stated that they followed that practice, while others have said quite clearly that they never kept the last copy of materials.

The 1992 ACPL Resource Development policy stated that "In order to continue to develop a useful and attractive collection, the library removes books and other materials which are no longer useful." Keeping a last copy would be a violation of this approved policy.

The idea of a last copy is sentimental but also a very costly practice. If we use conservative figures to estimate the cost of keeping a book, it currently costs the library – and ultimately taxpayers - over half a million dollars just to house materials that have not circulated in over 10 years. That is \$500,000 we cannot use to purchase materials taxpayers want and need.

If a book is not available in our library, we assist customers to get that resource through interlibrary loan. Through a network of library systems, customers can borrow materials from

other participating libraries. Our library system is an active participant in that network, and we are a net loaner. That means that we loan out more materials to other library systems than we borrow for our customers.

4. Question:

What is the reason for subverting degreed librarians' expertise in managing a collection they know so well?

Answer:

To provide some context for this question, the Petitioners have stated that non-librarians were used to pull items for discard.

We agree that the final decision to discard an item should rest in the hands of professional, degreed librarians. Nonprofessional staffers are not authorized to make decisions as to which items remain or are removed from the collection.

The job description for branch managers says they “oversee collection management through weeding, consultation with adult, non-print and youth collection development librarians, and filling customer’s special requests.”

In contrast, the job description of a Shelver includes the “occasional weeding of the collection upon the request and with the direction of a librarian.” That means a shelver may assist in the physical process of pulling items for librarians to review or doing the manual labor of discarding items that the professional staff has selected for removal.

As it relates to storage, support staff works from reports to identify items that fall within the parameters for weeding. They physically tip those items in order to mark them. However, it is the professional staff who are responsible for reviewing those items to decide whether to weed or keep each one.

We appreciate that you brought this concern to our attention. We will continue to emphasize to our professional staff that they cannot delegate those very important decisions to less

qualified team members, or rely solely on data without using any professional discretion to weed a resource. This is something library management will continue to educate and emphasize to our staff.

5. Question:

How does having three people, ordering ALL items for the entire library, including the branches, benefit the development of the collection and the patrons' interests?

Answer:

In this question, the Petitioners are referring to the three staff members who oversee Collection Development for the Library.

The Library does have centralized collection development. It is a practice that began 10 years before the current Director arrived.

In 2004, ACPL centralized the ordering of all adult materials for the branch libraries. That was eventually followed by centralized collection development for the Main Library in 2013. Prior to centralized collection development, ordering and processing of materials was not streamlined. This resulted in delays in getting new items processed and onto the shelves for customers, as well as delays in getting books into and out of the holds system.

Our current collection development team is comprised of professional librarians who have all been front-line librarians and have managed library locations. They have a combined 50 years of experience in collection development. Their responsibilities are divided into the areas of youth, adult, and non-print materials.

Because collection development is their only job, this team is able to specialize. They spend time reading reviews, going through lists, and analyzing data on the usage of the collection to identify trends that might impact ordering of materials.

Importantly, the Collection Development Team regularly seeks input and receives feedback from branch and department managers, as well as those librarians who plan and deliver

programs for our customers to make the best and most customized purchasing decisions possible.

For example, a branch manager knew that a group of her customers were taking the contractors exam. To better serve her customers, that manager requested the ordering of several more sets of the building codes and study guides. The collection development team were able to fulfill this request. This process saved the branch manager time and allowed her to focus more on her customers while the specialists procured the materials. This is the definition of best practices in customer service.

Members of the Collection Development Team also attend the Programming meeting. By doing so, they discovered the popularity of crafting programs throughout the library system. This led to the purchase of a crafting database called CreativeBug, as well as the purchase of more crafting books. Again, we seek to provide high end customer service, and this structure helps us to do so.

In Greta's presentation, she also shared that an important aspect of collection management is the display and marketing of the collection to make it more appealing to customers. Branch managers are very engaged in that aspect of managing their collection to showcase items for customers. We know that customers who can see the front cover of a book are more likely to pick it up and explore it rather than simply looking at a long line of book spines. This is why having more open shelving is important. If you walk into any bookstore you can see this concept immediately – they do it because it works.

A specialized team who can spot trends, streamline the ordering process and allow the professionals on the floor to more closely interact with their customers and their specific collections benefits everyone.

6. Question:

Do you find this arrangement as alarming as the public does? Will the director address this conflict of interest?

Answer:

The context for this question from the Petitioners is that Collection HQ, a data tool used to manage the collection, is owned by Baker & Taylor – a vendor from which the Library orders materials.

The wording of the question gives the impression that Collection HQ dictates to ACPL which and how many books to discard. That is not true. It is the tool that helps us analyze the library's circulation data, but ultimately we rely on our staff's professional judgement. Again, data informs the process, it does not dictate it.

In 2018 the Collection Development Team ordered from at least 60 vendors.

Less than one-quarter of the 2018 materials budget was spent with Baker & Taylor.

7. Question:

Is the director readying the branches for these renovations by purging most of their collections?

Answer:

This question from the Petitioners is in relation to a consultants' report that called for completely replacing the Aboite and Dupont branches, as well as renovating others.

There are no plans at this time to replace branches, though it is true that Aboite and Dupont are two of the busiest locations and are limited in their ability to expand in their current locations. Additionally, these two branches were the only two that did not receive any renovation or construction during the library's expansion and renovation process fourteen or fifteen years ago. There are no immediate plans to renovate other locations, aside from basic maintenance and updates.

It is true that some locations like Dupont, Georgetown, and Aboite have very high circulation and limited space. In order to accommodate this reality, these branches must weed more

aggressively than others in order to make room for new material. And yet, other locations have low and declining circulation and more shelf space than needed.

However, our customers in all locations want more seating, meeting and gathering spaces. Locations with more shelf space than needed are fortunate in that they have more flexibility with their space to rearrange and make more room for people to use their facilities.

Over the past decade there has been a significant change in how people are using libraries. They aren't using the library less, they are using it in different ways. As communities evolve, we need to be responsive to the needs and interests of those we serve.

8. Question:

How do the director and the Board of Trustees justify basing such a drastic strategic plan on a biased survey that only 1,267 people completed — a survey that failed to address the question of a “large scale collection downsize” (from “*The Magical Art of Tidying*” ACPL presentation at Indiana Library Federation)?

Answer:

The Library undertook an open and deliberative approach to soliciting feedback from the community as it entered into the strategic planning process. 14 public forums were held for community members and stakeholders. There were additional forums for staff members and board members.

A forum was held specifically for the Burmese community. Surveys were offered at each of our 15 locations. The opportunity to complete a survey or participate in a public forum was shared in numerous newspaper articles, local news programs, and through the Library's marketing channels.

Every effort was taken to drive public participation and engagement in the process, and the Board appreciates those who took the time to share their thoughts.

Aside from the surveys and forums, community members tell the Library every single day about their preferences. Last year, the Library's total collection usage was more than 14.5 million and over 144,000 people attended Library programs.

Our community shares information regarding their preferences every time they place an item on Hold or checkout materials. Every program or event Library customers attend informs the staff's decision-making process. They also contribute to the process when they don't use items or attend programs. Staff takes that into consideration as well.

Again, Library staff do not make decisions in a vacuum. Why would they? Librarians have a passion for the library. By their nature they want to preserve and protect the collection and usage of this public resource, By checking out an item – or not doing so – customers help us make responsible decisions every day.

9. Question:

As a new strategic plan has already been implemented, what is the vision for our library? What kind of library is the director creating? What is the ultimate goal for downsizing the collection as radically as stated in the ILF/ACPL presentation, various internal emails, and internal meeting minutes?

Answer:

The Director is not independently seeking to create a certain type of library. The board, staff and community believe the library is a living, evolving organization. The form it takes is directly influenced by the community that it serves.

What materials do our customers want and need? How do they use our facilities? What is the direction our community as a whole is taking? We ask all these questions because ultimately we are here to serve the community.

This response to this question is also informed by the four main goals identified in the Library's strategic plan, which was approved by the Board.

ACPL actively supports the community's value for promoting life-long learning, economic growth and overall quality of life.

- 1) To broaden ACPL's reach throughout the community through direct connections and strong community partnerships.
- 2) To create welcoming and easy-to-use environments at all locations.
- 3) To provide meaningful, innovative, and adaptable content and services.

There is no goal to downsize the collection. The goal is to have a robust, accurate collection at convenient and appropriately constructed locations that are regularly used by the community.

10. Question:

Using the architectural drawings and data from the 2001 ACPL expansion, what is the capacity of the Main library for the total number of books that can be shelved there? How many books are currently shelved there?

Answer:

The new main library building, by design was expected to have a storage capacity to last ten to twenty years before it would reach maximum capacity. However, by the end of 2014, the storage levels were nearly full. This was just seven years after moving into the new building.

As of February 25, there were 855,798 items in storage. Those are only items that are available to circulate. That figure does not include the government documents and reference materials the library holds.

The promise of ten to twenty year capacity was gone after seven. We do not have infinite space. If we continue to keep uncirculating items forever, it will be at the expense of adding new, relevant items to the collection. For example, in 2014 when we reached capacity social media was just ramping up – if we quit adding to the collection at that time, any of our books or resources written to help the public understand and navigate the social media phenomenon would not be possible. And this is just one example.

11. Question:

Is the ACPL a popular materials library? Is the ACPL becoming a popular materials library? Are the algorithms of Collection HQ, which guide the purchasing of our library's materials, currently focusing on high-demand, high-circulation, and high-interest items to the exclusion of a balanced and robust collection?

Answer:

As previously stated, when the current Collection Development Policy was written in 2018, one of the goals was to use clear, concise language that was easily understood by everyone, not just library professionals.

In the collection development world, the concept of “popular interest” reflects a general audience, not how popular the materials are. This is to distinguish those materials from academic and professional collections. By that definition, the vast number of libraries in this country are popular libraries. ACPL has always been a library that houses materials intended for a general audience.

ACPL has always provided a variety of materials in different formats. That hasn't changed.

We now realize, however, that the term “popular materials” means different things to different audiences. It would seem that this concern over a philosophy shift really boils down to two sets of people using the same term but defining it differently. Because of this, staff has expressed a desire to update the language of the policy to provide more clarity. The updated language in the Collection Development Policy will be presented to the Board of Trustees at their regularly scheduled April 25 meeting.

12. Question:

Are either of these scenarios true? Is the library going to purchase and implement RFID? Is the Floating Collection, in which books remain at the branches they are returned to, going to be implemented?

Answer:

First, for context, the Petitioners are asking about RFID, a system that would replace the current barcode system. They are also asking about the concept of a floating collection, in which items would stay at the location to which they were returned. For example, a book that was checked out at Pontiac and returned to Tecumseh would stay at Tecumseh until it circulated to another location.

Both issues have been studied by staff. There are no plans to implement RFID. In 2018 ACPL floated the holiday magazines, and that activity was well received by the public. Though the organization has no current plans to float the rest of the collection, it is appropriate to continue to review all methods of ensuring that readers can access materials in the format and location of their choosing.

13. Question:

Is the Genealogy collection safe? How does the Board of Trustees know? How will the Board of Trustees know if it is not?

Answer:

A concerned Genealogy enthusiast reached out to Curt Witcher, the longtime manager of the Library's Genealogy Center. Curt has been with this Library for 40 years and has built his professional career and reputation here.

I'm going to read his response verbatim:

"Genealogy is a special collection within the Allen County Public Library system. We have never weeded this collection, and there are no plans to begin. Our acquisitions are healthy and strong, and the library administration and trustees have no intentions or plans to

change that. Our non-circulating collection remains intact, exceeding 1.1 million physical items, and is available for Allen County residents as well as a nation of customers.”

The Library’s Special Collections, which include the Genealogy Center, the Lincoln Collection, and the Fine Book Room, are not subject to weeding.

14. Question:

How is it possible not to describe this as a change to the criteria for discarding?

Answer:

For context, the Petitioners are referring to the idea that librarians in the branches and departments no longer have control over what is weeded or retained.

As has previously been discussed, weeding is still left to the judgment and discretion of the professional staff. Their decision making is now also supported by data. Our intent is for this to be a thoughtful, informed process that incorporates data that was not available to staff even 10 years ago. Weeding timelines are based on circulation data and the parameters vary and are based on the size of the branch and usage of the collection. What has changed is that in the past, there was not a consistent approach throughout the system, and now there is.

15. Question:

If a change in collection development philosophy is desired, breaking with a 124-year-old tradition, doesn’t the community deserve to know about it, react to it, and express opinions about it?

Answer:

The public constantly votes with their library card. They express their opinions every time they use an item. When an item is not used, that is also the public expressing an opinion.

Questions Sent to Trustees Inbox by Community Members

16. Question:

Has the redefinition of the purpose of the ACPL collection "to provide the most high-demand and high-interest materials for the community" been in any way influenced by the people who sell books and other media to the ACPL?

Answer:

This question was addressed in the response regarding Baker & Taylor.

17. Question:

Has the ACPL adopted what is often referred to as a popular collection management model and deliberately taken action to permanently remove a large percentage of the collection because it does not fall into the narrow definition of "popular", meaning materials that do not meet the Director's circulation parameters? What was the rationale for this rather extreme shift in the ACPL collection management policy?

Answer:

This question has been addressed.

18. Question:

What is the criteria and who makes the decision deciding if weeded books will be given to Friends of the Library or other groups or placed in storage?

Answer:

Library professionals make the final determination of whether or not an item should be weeded. Weeded items do not go into Storage. Items in Storage, with the exception of government documents, are still able to circulate.

Once an item has been weeded, and is not in poor condition; and does not contain outdated or harmful information, a member of the Material Support Services team determines if it

goes to the Friends sale. Otherwise, it might be sent to Internet Archive to be digitized and made available at no charge on the internet; or donated to an outside organization such as Goodwill.

19. Question:

Is there weeding of the items in storage too? Who decides? How?

Answer:

Weeding does occur in storage. The process is similar to that of items in public areas of the library. Data informs, but does not dictate the decision. For Juvenile Storage, librarians from Children’s Services are responsible for determining if an item should be weeded or retained. Because of the vast amount of items in storage, Material Support Services staff will use reports to “tip” books on the shelves, indicating that the book meets the criteria for weeding. However, it is the responsibility of a professional librarian to review the “tipped” items and make the final determination.

20. Question:

What is the percentage being spent on print books vs digital from the Materials Budget?

Answer:

In 2018, the Library reported the following data to the Indiana State Library:

\$2,190,465: Books

\$1,036,134: E-book, electronic collections, and database licensing/purchase/lease expenditures

21. Question:

What criteria is used with Collection HQ that determines what books will be weeded?

Answer:

Collection HQ does not determine what books will be weeded. It is a tool that provides information to professional staff to assist them in their decision making process. The parameters used in Collection HQ are determined by the Collection Development Team and are reviewed periodically.

Collection HQ takes into account how many times a specific item has been checked out. If it has been circulated a high number of times, it flags that it might be time to order a replacement copy. If it is not circulating or has not circulated in a designated amount of time (determined by location and size of branch), it flags the item.

However, the data is meant to inform, not dictate, the weeding process. In the past, staff would have to physically scan each item to obtain the same information that is now made readily available in reports.

22. Question:

If patrons request titles not found in the Collection, what criteria are used to determine whether the title will be purchased or Interlibrary loan is suggested?

Answer:

As stated in the Collection Development Policy: "Those items will be considered using the same selection criteria as other materials." The selection criteria can be found on page 4 of the Library's Collection Development Policy, which can be viewed in full on the Library's website.

Therefore, if the item does not meet the general selection criteria or is simply unavailable for purchase, the customer's request will be forwarded to InterLibrary Loan.

23. Question:

What is the holds to active copies ratio that is being used to order more copies of a popular title?

Answer:

For every 5 customers who have placed a book on Hold, that initiates the purchase of another copy of that title. In other words, even if the system says you are number 128 in line for a book, there are never truly more than 5 people in line in front of you.

24. Question:

How much time do the Collection Development team spend on weeding as opposed to developing the current collection by purchasing new titles?

Answer:

Members of the Collection Development Team are not actively engaged in weeding. Typically, members of the Collection Development Team pull previous editions of titles when they are ordering updated versions or new editions. However, that requires more time than it should because of the current state of the collection. The majority of their time is spent on researching and purchasing new titles.

25. Question:

Why has more emphasis been given to a program like Collection HQ instead of relying on librarians that work with and know the needs of their individual Communities when weeding branch and main library department collections?

Answer:

The importance of professional staff in the weeding process has been previously addressed.

26. Question:

Where do all the books not sold at a book sale go? Are they offered to local organizations?

Answer:

The ultimate goal is to provide those books with a second life. Books that do not sell at the Friends of the Library book sales are might be sent to Internet Archive where they are digitized and made available to read online at no cost. Some are sent to Salvation Army for their customers. There are also third party vendors such as Better World Books, who sell the items on a consignment basis, with those proceeds ultimately benefitting the Library.

27. Question:

If you are getting rid of books does that mean your book budget will go down? Are you spending more on Ebooks?

Answer:

In 2018, the Library spent 13.1% of its operating budget on the collection. The standard in Indiana is 8%. The demand for e-books does continue to rise, and we are mindful of serving the customers that prefer that format. However, as noted earlier, the amount spent on print materials still far exceeds that of e-resources.

28. Question:

Who decides what is to be weeded?

Answer:

This question has been addressed.

29. Question:

Why did you need to expand if you have empty shelves?

Answer:

15 years ago the Library system was largely based upon print materials. Over the course of time there has been an increase in the use of electronic materials.

There was also a growing demand at that time for meeting and gathering spaces. This was reflected in the capital projects at that time.

30. Question:

When will this happen to Genealogy?

Answer:

This question has been addressed.

SECTION 2

ACPL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
ASKED AT THE MARCH 27, 2019
PUBLIC MEETING**



AUDIENCE QUESTIONS

1. Question:

What is the current number of items in the collection? Or most recent number?

Answer:

According to ACPL's 2018 annual report, the collection included:

- 2.4 million print books
- 164,039 e-books
- 91,627 videos (includes DVD, Blu-Ray, VHS, Playaway video)
- 70,703 audio (includes CD, DVD, audiobooks,MP3, Playaway books)

2. Question:

If the last book procedure has never been a policy, maybe the board should discuss whether it should be a procedure. If not, why?

Answer:

It has not been official ACPL policy to keep the last copy of items. While the practice has been referred to in speeches given by a former Director, and there were some staff who supported the idea, it was never codified or followed consistently throughout the library system.

It is also not an idea that the majority of branch managers at the main library support. The idea was discussed at the April 16, 2019 management meeting, which is attended by all managers throughout the system. The following is information from that meeting that was relayed to the Board:

"The suggestion was made at the management team meeting of incorporating last copy language to formalize the retention of a last copy. One manager was clearly in favor of this, a few branch managers thought that Main department managers were already doing this; however, Main managers (with the exception of one department who proposed the idea) said they were not in favor of this and that they currently were not retaining the last copy, nor did they want to do so in the future. This past practice which was randomly adhered to is not sustainable. We discussed a new tool that we have access to that analyzed our holdings as compared to other libraries. This tool allows us to expose items of lasting value and allow us to make strategic decisions about which items should have long term access. We can then make informed decisions as to how those items are then preserved and accessed."

3. Question:

How does copyright law influence the decision to send books to Internet Archive?

Answer:

While ACPL donates the materials in question, as an independent organization, Internet Archive is ultimately responsible for following any applicable copyright laws.

4. Question:

What is the content and the intentions of buying new books?

Answer:

When choosing materials to purchase, ACPL staff consider factors such as customer interest, cost, and space. They also take into account anticipated or existing demand; local interest; reputation and skill of the author, performer, or artist; existing library resources in the subject area; published reviews; availability of titles from other sources; and the physical durability of the item.

5. Question:

Will ACPL possibly use current email system to send out a survey?

Answer:

There are no plans at this time to put forth another questionnaire or survey. The survey and public forums in 2017 were designed to inform the strategic planning process.

6. Question:

If weeding criteria is based on what is circulating, are there any counts of what is used in the library but not checked out? Is that being tracked?

Answer:

In-house use is tracked, and does inform weeding decisions. The Board and Library leadership are aware that at some branches, there are higher percentages of customers who are not able to check out materials, but use the Library's resources on-site.

Admittedly, one problem with this is that some individuals, wishing to be helpful to staff, re-shelving items. This prevents the item's use from being noted, it has been suggested that signage be posted, instructing customers not to re-shelve items.

SECTION 3

ACPL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED TO
TRUSTEES@ACPL.INFO
THROUGH APRIL 3, 2019**



QUESTIONS SENT TO TRUSTEES@ACPL.INFO

Customer Privacy: Wise and Analytics on Demand

1. Question:

Historically, the ACPL has been a very strong advocate of patrons' privacy rights. However, under this director's leadership, the ACPL is now purchasing patrons' credit card information from AOD to compile demographic information on them. The public has not been informed of this, nor is there any written policy that states the usage of this information despite American Library Association recommendations to the contrary. The use of patrons' credit card information along with the new ACPL operating system, WISE, is cause for grave privacy concerns. WISE tracks (with user opt-in) the activity of a person's library card usage, as well as the history of any items they check out, much like Amazon keeps track of the books you purchase for marketing purposes. This, again, is something ACPL had never done prior to this administration.

On behalf of unsuspecting library patrons, we would like to know, how will our personal information be used? Will it be provided to another entity? Do you have plans to let the public know about this? Will there be a forthcoming board-approved privacy policy put in place? If not, how will we know what is happening with our personal data?

Answer:

In response to concerns regarding Wise and how data may be used:

- When we launch the new system this summer, transaction history will be available to:
- Provide library customers with a convenient and accurate record of their borrowing history, which can be viewed securely in their online accounts.
- Support ACPL to better meet community needs about collection use, and for more meaningful marketing and communications.
- Library customers have ultimate control. They always have the option to opt out of library marketing communications and can request that staff place a "block" on their borrowing history to anonymize transactions.
- Neither OCLC nor the ACPL sell personally identifiable information to other entities.

As ACPL prepares to use the new system, staff will communicate with customers in a number of ways to educate them on new features. This communication will take many forms, as customers interact with the Library in numerous ways, and will allow each individual to make an informed choice about the storage and use of data generated by their personal relationship with the library.

In regard to policies stemming from the system, there are no plans at this time to introduce any new policies. The Allen County Public Library's policy titled "Library Records" specifically

addresses issues related to our customer's privacy in the section titled "Patron Confidentiality."

"By Indiana law and library board policy, all records relating to library patrons and their use of library materials and services and all records deposited with or acquired by the library upon condition that the records be disclosed only upon certain circumstances are strictly confidential, subject to said records being used (i) in claims against library patrons for collection of fines, materials and other expenses, (ii) in any other litigation wherein said records are material, or (iii) when said records are ordered to be disclosed by a civil, criminal or administrative court having jurisdiction over the same. Library staff members are not authorized to disclose such records to any third party, except as set forth herein, and shall consult with the library's legal counsel prior to responding to such request. Under Indiana law, minors are accorded the same confidentiality rights as adults.

The library and its partners take seriously the obligation to protect the privacy of every patron. This commitment to patrons' privacy may appear to cause inconvenience on occasion. However, this is a small price to pay for the assurance that an individual's reading preferences and use of the library will remain exclusively his or her own business."

ACPL has philosophically and practically operated under best practices of maintaining the confidentiality of Library users. Guided by the language and spirit of the existing policy as noted above, library leadership and staff are collaborating to develop operating procedures that will be posted on the Library's website.

2. Question:

Is ACPL collecting patron data/information from credit card payments used to pay fines, or from library records? If so, is ACPL sharing this patron data/information with others, and who is ACPL sharing it with? Have patrons consented to this collection of data/information? Have patrons consented to the sharing of data/information? If so, please indicate how this consent was obtained by patrons.

Answer:

In relation to assertions that ACPL is using its customers' credit card data, acquired when customers use credit to pay library fines, etc., ***that is not true. ACPL does not retain customers' credit card information, obtained through library interactions, for marketing purposes or to sell to third-party vendors.*** Neither OCLC nor the ACPL sell personally identifiable information to other entities.

3. Question:

Has my private information been passed along if I paid off my bill with a credit card? When was I informed of this policy?

Answer:

In relation to assertions that ACPL is using its customers' credit card data, acquired when customers use credit to pay library fines, etc., *that is not true. ACPL does not retain customers' credit card information, obtained through library interactions, for marketing purposes or to sell to third-party vendors.* Neither OCLC nor the ACPL sell personally identifiable information to other entities.

4. Question:

Why do you feel it necessary to purchase patrons' credit card information? Why do you feel it is OK to infringe upon patrons' privacy in this manner? How can you guarantee privacy?

Answer:

In relation to assertions that ACPL is using its customers' credit card data, acquired when customers use credit to pay library fines, etc., *that is not true. ACPL does not retain customers' credit card information, obtained through library interactions, for marketing purposes or to sell to third-party vendors.* Neither OCLC nor the ACPL sell personally identifiable information to other entities.

5. Question:

Is my checkout record erased after books returned and fines paid, or is a record being kept? If the new system is to "help me with selecting other books that I may like," isn't that an invasion of my privacy? Am I able to opt out of this if this is the case?

Answer:

When we launch the new system this summer, transaction history will be available to:

- Provide library customers with a convenient and accurate record of their borrowing history, which can be viewed securely in their online accounts.
- Support ACPL to better meet community needs about collection use, and for more meaningful marketing and communications.

Library customers have ultimate control. They always have the option to opt out of library marketing communications and can request that staff place a "block" on their borrowing history to anonymize transactions.

Libraries recognize that customer expectations are changing, and many people expect more individualized service in all aspects of their lives. For customers who prefer a more personalized library experience, the system allows ACPL to meet those expectations, but it also supports customers who prefer to keep their transaction history private.

As ACPL prepares to use the new system, staff will communicate with customers in a number of ways to educate them on new features. This communication will take many forms, as customers interact with the Library in numerous ways, and will allow each individual to make an informed choice about the storage and use of data generated by their personal relationship with the library.

6. Question:

Was the board aware credit card information was being sold; and if so, how much revenue was received?

Answer:

In relation to assertions that ACPL is using its customers' credit card data, acquired when customers use credit to pay library fines, etc., ***that is not true. ACPL does not retain customers' credit card information, obtained through library interactions, for marketing purposes or to sell to third-party vendors.*** Neither OCLC nor the ACPL sell personally identifiable information to other entities.

ACPL uses a tool called Analytics on Demand (AOD). The AOD tool provides libraries with broad demographic data that helps them understand who is – and is not – using the library, and how to better serve both groups. AOD's systems and procedures are designed to protect the privacy of individual customers. Addresses and circulation data are disassociated from customer names. All data is blended in a secure cloud environment. This same tool is used by other library systems around the country including the Toledo Lucas Public Library (which includes 20 locations and four outreach vehicles); SNO-ISLE Libraries in Washington State (23 locations); and Gwinnett County Public Library in Georgia (15 locations).

AOD uses circulation information, U.S. census data, and Experian consumer credit information to develop general marketing profiles. The profiles (or market segmentations) assist libraries in more effectively promoting library services, programs, and resources to existing customers. Just as importantly, it provides needed insights to help promote the library to those in our community who are not using the services, programs, and resources available to them. For example, a manager at one branch, upon reviewing the profiles for his branch said, "I didn't realize we had so many older customers. We focus so much on children's programming, but we're not really doing anything for older adults."

At the October 25, 2018 meeting of the ACPL's Board of Trustees, the board was provided information on AOD, its purpose, and how reports generated by the tool are interpreted and used by library staff.

7. Question:

Who made the choice to purchase this software (Wise) from overseas and why? Was there any incentive or reward for this purchase to anyone associated with the library or its board members?

Answer:

Although Wise originated in the Netherlands and is currently used by a large portion of Dutch public libraries, it was not purchased by ACPL overseas. It is being sourced from OCLC, a nonprofit global library cooperative that provides shared technology services, original research, and community programs for libraries, based in Dublin, Ohio. OCLC acquired Wise in 2013 and have spent the past few years tailoring the system to US public libraries.

ACPL was approached by OCLC to partner for evaluative testing as it was being introduced to the United States. Staff and leadership who participated were impressed by the system's capabilities, which far exceeded the current 20-year-old system, as well as how it approaches the importance of community engagement. The Board of Trustees approved the decision to purchase Wise at the April 2018 board meeting.

The only incentive associated with this purchase on the part of library staff or board members was the system's ability to better serve library customers.

Internet Archive/Digitization of Materials

8. Question:

How does the library plan to educate the public about less-known online resources such as books available such as the Internet Archive (IA)?

Answer:

Library staff regularly introduce customers to electronic resources, including Overdrive, Hoopla, and the Internet Archive. All of these have been promoted at various times via the Library's social media platforms. When Library staff conducts behind-the-scenes tours of the Main Library, they regularly include the digitization area that Internet Archive occupies on Lower Level 1. One such tour with members of the media resulted in extensive coverage of Internet Archive in The Journal-Gazette.

Internet Archive is an independent, nonprofit, online library. It also promotes itself as a resource available to everyone.

9. Question:

Copyright law prohibits organizations like Google and Internet Archive from making available published materials that are still subject to copyright; does the library take this into account when choosing to remove physical items from its shelves and send them to Internet Archive?

Answer:

As an independent organization, Internet Archive is ultimately responsible for following any applicable copyright laws. However, we can share that customers have open access to materials with copyright dates prior to 1923. Materials dated after that are available in IA's lending library, and have a two-week loan period.

10. Question:

How many books have been sent to the Internet Archive?

Answer:

ACPL began sending material to IA in 2008. Historically there has not been a record kept of how many items were sent to IA. However, according to Material Support Services staff, the two most recent shipments to Internet Archive, were sent on December 15, 2018 and February 4, 2019, The shipments were comprised of items that had failed to sell at Friends book sales through the ACPL system. The estimated total of these shipments is 36,960.

Items sent to Internet Archive are books previously discarded or failed to sell at a Friends of the Library book sale.

11. Question:

Where can the public find a list of books that have been donated to the Internet Archive? If no such list exists, how does the library intend to go about creating one and making it available to the public?

Answer:

Internet Archive has its own website located at: <https://archive.org/> On that site is a search function for readers to locate the book they want. There is no specific list of the materials ACPL has donated since 2008. The vast majority of items sent to Internet Archive are materials that were either discarded or donated and failed to sell at a Friends of ACPL book sale. When items are purchased at sales, only the quantity and purchase price of the materials are tracked, not the individual titles. As a result, there is not an inventory list available at the conclusion of any Friends book sale.

12. Question:

Could the ACPL state a position on the legality of CDL (Controlled Digital Loans) of copyright material and its use by the Internet Archive?

Answer:

As an independent organization, Internet Archive is ultimately responsible for following any applicable copyright laws. However, we can share that customers have open access to materials with copyright dates prior to 1923. Materials dated after that are available in IA's lending library, and have a two-week loan period.

13. Question:

How many currently copyrighted books has the ACPL contributed to the Internet Archive from its basement digitization center?

Answer:

Since forming a relationship with IA in 2008, that information is not tracked. As an independent organization, Internet Archive is ultimately responsible for following any applicable copyright laws. However, we can share that customers have open access to materials with copyright dates prior to 1923. Materials dated after that are available in IA's lending library, and have a two-week loan period.

14. Question:

What is the procedure for donating a book to the Internet Archive?

Answer:

In the majority of cases, an item is donated to Internet Archive after it has failed to sell at a Friends of the Library book sale. In some cases, as Material Support Services staff are sorting discarded materials, they send an item that meets Internet Archive's requirements to be digitized instead of first sending it to the Friends.

15. Question:

What is the procedure for determining if a weeded (but still usable) book will be sold to the public vs donated to the Internet Archive?

Answer:

In the majority of cases, an item is donated to Internet Archive after it has failed to sell at a Friends of the Library book sale. However, there are times in which the Friends shelves in storage are full. To make room for new items, members of Material Support Services staff may pull already-discarded items off the Friends shelves and direct those materials to Internet Archive for digitization.

16. Question:

Does the board view the library as having an obligation to archive local digital news releases (for example, videos or articles posted to WANE TV's website)?

Answer:

No, ACPL does not have the digital storage space or rights to house that information and has never done so.

17. Question:

Is the library board familiar with the importance of digital archiving? Besides Internet Archive, can the board identify at least one additional organization dedicated to preservation of digital content?

Answer:

The Digital Public Library would be an example of an organization that is dedicated to the preservation of digital content. Indiana Memory and Family Search are two other organizations dedicated to the preservation of digital content. ACPL has excellent relationships with all three of them.

18. Question:

What is the legal and ethical reasoning behind your scanning and distribution of copyrighted books?

Answer:

As an independent organization, Internet Archive is ultimately responsible for following any applicable copyright laws. However, we can share that customers have open access to materials with copyright dates prior to 1923. Materials dated after that are available in IA's lending library, and have a two-week loan period.

ACPL Staff

19. Question:

At the 2/28/19 board meeting, we asked the Board of Trustees to create a safe place (or way) for staff to speak without fear of retaliation. Was that done? If so, how many members of the Board of Trustees have spoken to staff?

Answer:

Concerns regarding the need for a more open environment and increased communication to and with staff have been acknowledged by the Board and shared with Library

Administration. Library leadership is in the process of creating and implementing an internal communications plan.

20. Question:

How will the board address low staff morale since they have no input into library collection development anymore?

Answer:

Professional staff do have input into collection development. For librarian and branch/department positions, the responsibility to manage the collection at their location is incorporated into job descriptions. They are charged with working with members of the Collection Development Team to order replacements for lost, damaged, or highly used items. They work with CDT to order new materials that a customer has requested and is not already in the Library's collection. Professional staff also have the ability to request materials that are specific to the unique customer base served by our various branches and departments.

Beyond that, the Board has no specific role in addressing staff morale other than working with the Library's leadership as it continues to improve the flow of communication both up and down the chain.

21. Question:

What is the future of professional librarianship at ACPL, and why should a librarian work for ACPL since the professionalism of the staff is disrespected?

Answer:

The Board and leadership of the Allen County Public Library value and appreciate the level of expertise and knowledge that our professional staff contribute. Job descriptions reflect the importance of the training and experience that professional library staff have acquired.

As a further indication of the importance of all staff members, the Library's leadership wants to ensure that each employee is being compensated appropriately. To inform this process, the Library's Human Resources Department recently undertook a compensation study. It has been 30+ years since employee pay levels and job descriptions were analyzed throughout the organization.

One reason why it was important for ACPL to undertake this initiative was to ensure that our employees are being paid a competitive wage for the work they perform. In fields in which there is competition for good employees, it is important to offer wages that are in line with job descriptions and competitive compared to other markets and organizations. This is a common practice in fields such as health care, IT, and library sciences.

22. Question:

Why were there almost no current employees at the public meeting? Was it because they don't care? Was it because they don't dare? Will the Board commit to offer employees an opportunity to present their experiences and concerns in a safe environment, without the presence or knowledge of any other Library employees, staff, or administrators?

Answer:

There were a number of current employees in attendance at the public meeting. It is not the Board's place to speculate why those who did not attend chose not to do so. The Director sent an email to all Library staff in advance of the meeting. In that email, she directly stated that Library employees were free to attend, as long as they were not "on the clock" at that time.

An email was also sent to all staff informing them of when the public meeting would be rebroadcast on Access Fort Wayne.

23. Question:

Does the Board acknowledge that this language (editor's note: contained in the Ethics Policy) is overly broad and vague and might (potentially) result in an atmosphere of fear of reprisal, or otherwise create a chilling effect on the willingness of library employees to voice their concerns?

Answer:

The Board does not acknowledge that the language of the Ethics Policy has created a chilling effect on Library employees expressing their concerns. The language of the policy is designed to have general application to a wide variety of circumstances in which ACPL's employees, Trustees and officers may be situated or involved. The purpose in having an Ethics Policy is to provide guidance to, in this case, Trustees, officers and employees as those parties act in their respective capacities for or on behalf of ACPL. All of those parties are obligated to fulfill their duties and act in a manner that will reflect properly on ACPL, and not have an adverse effect on it.

24. Question:

When the Board first became aware of allegations that a gag-order had been put in place, what steps did the Board take to clarify this (or other similar) sections of library policy to ease employee fears?

Answer:

The following is a response from at least one Trustee: "As concerns have been raised and discussed, we have both worked with our director to fully understand the issue and spoken

directly to staff and others. We have welcomed and do welcome everyone to provide input to us through our email at Trustees@acpl.info or directly during the public comment portion of our monthly board meetings. We especially welcomed the very productive public comments we received at our last board meeting.

In addition, our director has informed staff that individual board members may speak with them directly and all staff should feel free to answer our questions and provide input. We want open communication between all employees.”

25. Question:

How does the Board intend to clarify this (and other similar language) to make it clear that library employees will not be punished for raising concerns in the future?

Answer:

The policy in question was presented to the Board, then underwent revision and legal review. There are no plans to alter the existing policy. Library leadership will continue to share the message that the policy is not meant to be used in a retaliatory manner.

By its specific statement, the Whistleblower Policy is designed to “encourage and enable employees and volunteers to raise serious concerns internally.” This is not “strictly legal”. The Ethics Policy speaks to much more than legal matters, and the reference to regulations that govern the Library’s operations is viewed by ACPL management and trustees as being a very general reference to any rule dealing with policies or procedures.

We cannot speak to what “impression” people may have of the Whistleblower policy, but we believe its language is clear in protecting any form of communication that is intended to report allegations of unethical or illegal conduct or matters that are in violation of regulations that govern the Library’s operations.

26. Question:

Does the Board acknowledge that the repeated use of the terms “law,” “regulation,” and “ethics violation” create a strong and consistent impression that Whistleblower protections extend only to strictly legal matters?

Answer:

Whistleblower protection, in whatever form or forum, is a product of the Federal law and the legal process; however, ACPL’s adoption of a Whistleblower Policy is not limited to “strictly legal matters”. By its specific statement, the Whistleblower Policy is designed to “encourage and enable employees and volunteers to raise serious concerns internally.” This is not “strictly legal”. The Ethics Policy speaks to much more than legal matters, and the reference to regulations that govern the Library’s operations is viewed by ACPL management and trustees as being a very general reference to any rule dealing with policies or procedures. We cannot speak to what “impression” people may have of the Whistleblower policy, but we believe its language is clear in protecting any form of communication that is intended to

report allegations of unethical or illegal conduct or matters that are in violation of regulations that govern the Library's operations.

27. Question:

Does the Board acknowledge that this protection would not be reasonably expected to cover concerns about overweeding, library policy, governance, purchasing decisions, and a wide range of other potential issues that many library staff might wish to discuss?

Answer:

While the Whistleblower Policy may not make reference to specific Library practices, policies, or decision-making, it is intended to have a broad scope and broad reach in its requirement of all employees, officers and trustees to conduct their business "fairly, impartially, in an ethical and proper manner". These words are not otherwise defined and can reasonably be interpreted liberally. If the concern raised by the question is that employees desiring to express concerns about overweeding and other library matters feel that they do not have the right to do so or will be retaliated against if they do so, we can say that we have encouraged and continue to encourage Library employees to speak their mind about matters of concern, so long as in doing so they do not behave in a manner that raises questions about the Library's honesty and integrity, as set forth in the Ethics Policy. Also, we've stated that ACPL employees have the First Amendment right of free speech as it relates to matters of public concern.

28. Question:

Does the Board acknowledge that the combination of the broad and vague ethics policy prohibitions combined with the specific and narrow Whistleblower protection policy (limited strictly to matters of ethics and law) may have resulted in a culture of fear among library employees?

Answer:

We do not know that would have created any particular culture in ACPL or among employees, including the suggested culture of fear. We do know that ACPL leadership is preparing to implement an employee relations plan related to internal communications. The Trustees and the Director recognize that certain staff members have concerns about communicating their opinions, and we and the Director intend to address such matters so that a better, more open environment among staff can be created. Some ACPL employees have felt free to express their opinions, including in a manner that may be inconsistent with the stated position of ACPL management, while others have chosen not to. No action has been taken against these employees expressing their opinions. The Trustees' and Director's goal is to create a better, more welcoming, and better functioning environment among the more than 300 ACPL employees.

29. Question:

How does the Board intend to dispel this culture of fear and uncertainty among library employees?

Answer:

The Board maintains that the policies it has put in place are not intended to create a culture of fear or uncertainty. However, perception is reality. The Board is working with the Library's senior leadership to put into place communication tools for staff to communicate their concerns and provide feedback.

The following is a response from at least one Trustee: "As concerns have been raised and discussed, we have both worked with our director to fully understand the issue and spoken directly to staff and others. We have welcomed and do welcome everyone to provide input to us through our email at Trustees@acpl.info or directly during the public comment portion of our monthly board meetings. We especially welcomed the very productive public comments we received at our last board meeting. In addition, our director has informed staff that individual board members may speak with them directly and all staff should feel free to answer our questions and provide input. We want open communication between all employees."

30. Question:

Is it true that there is a document and policy stating that ACPL employees are not allowed to make any statement that could be considered derogatory against the library?

Answer:

No.

31. Question:

With so many reports about a hostile work environment, why hasn't the board spoken confidentially to staff or to those who have left under duress?

Answer:

Board members have visited branches and departments to talk with staff on a variety of issues – weeding, selection of materials, and employee morale. The Board has also established an email address. All messages sent via that email are distributed to all Board members.

The following is a response from at least one Trustee: "As concerns have been raised and discussed, we have both worked with our director to fully understand the issue and spoken

directly to staff and others. We have welcomed and do welcome everyone to provide input to us through our email at Trustees@acpl.info or directly during the public comment portion of our monthly board meetings. We especially welcomed the very productive public comments we received at our last board meeting. In addition, our director has informed staff that individual board members may speak with them directly and all staff should feel free to answer our questions and provide input. We want open communication between all employees.”

32. Question:

Have you, or your lawyer, interviewed the staff of the library to get relevant information on either of these issues? (Editor’s note: practice of weeding books and whether those employees who speak out against it) If not, will you agree to do so, or have someone on your behalf do so, as part of your investigation into the allegations that have been raised before you conclude your investigation and report the results to the community?

Answer:

Board members have visited branches and departments to talk with staff on a variety of issues – weeding, selection of materials, and employee morale. The Board has also established an email address. All messages sent via that email are distributed to all Board members.

33. Question:

Documented accounts of ACPL’s hostile work environment, suppressed employee communication, and threats of punishment, including severance of employment since these collection-reducing directives have been implemented are very troubling. Talent flight and loss of “tribal knowledge”, skills and ties to the community are costly and further weaken and “dumb down” our library. As fear prevents employees from speaking out, are the Trustees aware of this personnel issue? What are the Trustees doing to mitigate this damage and to improve the workplace culture?

Answer:

It is important to state that according to ACPL’s Human Resources Manager, there have been no documented accounts of a hostile work environment, suppressed employee communication, or threats of punishment, including severance of employment, related to these public concerns. Those allegations, if they had been made, would have been taken seriously and would have resulted in further action by HR.

The following is a response from at least one Trustee: “As concerns have been raised and discussed, we have both worked with our director to fully understand the issue and spoken directly to staff and others. We have welcomed and do welcome everyone to provide input to us through our email at Trustees@acpl.info or directly during the public comment portion of our monthly board meetings. We especially welcomed the very productive public comments we received at our last board meeting. In addition, our director has informed staff that individual board members may speak with them directly and all staff should feel

free to answer our questions and provide input. We want open communication between all employees.”

34. Question:

Since the staff seem to be afraid of coming forward for fear of losing their jobs, could the board hire a neutral person to conduct confidential interviews with all frontline staff and anyone else who wishes to participate?

Answer:

It is not necessary for the Board to conduct such a process or hire a neutral person. The Library’s Human Resources department already has a confidential process in place, through which staff can share concerns on any situation within the Library system. HR leadership will continue to message to staff that there are avenues – confidential methods – to share concerns and ask questions.

35. Question:

Have you talked with any of the front-line public-serving managers (long-term department heads and branch managers who have not yet abandoned the ACPL for other positions) to ask them about the changes which have been dictated to them from above? How the overall morale of them and their staff have been impacted as they try to manage the public’s expectations concerning changes which have severely curtailed the offerings which were previously available to them within the library, specifically to those using the Main Library building?

Answer:

The following is a response from a Trustee: “I visited with seven Branches and two Main Library Department Managers and had phone conversations with three other Branches. Received specifics and demo of Collection HQ. All reps recognize Collection HQ as a tool and the service it provides in the Weeding process. Heard concerns and recognize the need for more OPEN two-way communication. Always available for contact.”

36. Question:

So knowing that the staff, in many cases, does NOT trust the administration...and also knowing the Board has experienced a tremendous public outcry from the tax payers of this county - - - did the Board attempt to find another method for eliciting questions of the public? A method which would be seen to be outside the control of the Director and her administration at the library?

Answer:

This response is based on the assumption that this question makes reference to the Trustees@acpl.info mailbox that has been communicated to those with concerns. All

messages and/or questions sent to the Trustees via the email address are sent to each member of the Board. Several of the messages received have been sent by staff.

37. Question:

Have you personally spoken with any (or preferably all) of the managers of the departments of the Allen County Public Library? If you have not yet spoken to with any (or preferably all) of the managers why not?

Answer:

The following is a response from a Trustee: “Yes, I have spoken with representatives from many Branches and Main Library Departments.”

38. Question:

Has the board spoken to current and former professionals from ACPL in order to get a true perspective of the current leadership and administration? If these conversations haven’t taken place, why?

Answer:

The following is a response from a Trustee: “Yes, I spoke with two former employees.”

39. Question:

Has the board spoken to a frontline librarian at every branch?

Answer:

The following is a response from a Trustee: “Yes, most Branches.”

40. Question:

Was the board aware that a Strategic Initiatives Manager position was created in 2016 and that position pays over \$92,000/year? What are the job duties specifically for this position? Doesn’t the creation of this position indicate a strategy change?

Answer:

Yes, the board was aware that the position was created and subsequently filled. The Position Summary included in the job description for this position states as follows:

“This position will be a key component in the development of a new strategic plan and plan implementation efforts. This position will collect, synthesize and analyze system data to assist the development of strategic direction, and ensure the library’s strategic direction and goals are met in collaboration with management and staff. Recommends adjustments, ensures approved strategies

are translated into workable, practical and sustainable processes that enhance productivity and results. Articulates the identification of overall quality measures that are instituted and/or realigned as necessary. Participates in communicating organizational performance related to strategic plan to internal and external stakeholders. Serves as a member of the Library's Senior Management Team."

41. Question:

What is the reasoning for having a paid staff position for a strategic planner at over \$90,000 a year? Isn't this a position designed to move the library collection to a popular materials collection?

Answer:

Please see response to previous question.

42. Question:

In 2016, during this restructuring, the director moved collection development to report to the IT manager, Kim Quintrell. Was this done to make it more automated – driven by database recommendations? If not, why move collection development to the IT department?

Answer:

At the time she was given oversight of the Collection Development Team, Ms. Quintrell was already supervising the Library's IT department, as well as those staff charged with cataloguing, and processing new materials. As part of that, Ms. Quintrell was already supervising staff who had MLS degrees. The decision was made to add the Collection Development Team to Ms. Quintrell's team. That resulted in a more streamlined management process for staff who were tasked with ordering, processing, and cataloguing the collection.

43. Question:

Is Kim Quintrell, the head of collection development, a degreed librarian with a Masters of Library Science?

Answer:

No.

44. Question:

Why is a non-library professional heading up the Collection Development Team, meaning no experience in Collection Development nor a Library Science Degree?

Answer:

At the time she was given oversight of the Collection Development Team, Ms. Quintrell was already supervising the Library's IT department, as well as those staff charged with

cataloguing, and processing new materials. As part of that, Ms. Quintrell was already supervising staff who had MLS degrees. The decision was made to add the Collection Development Team to Ms. Quintrell's team. That resulted in a more streamlined management process for staff who were tasked with ordering, processing, and cataloguing the collection.

Throughout various sectors, it is not unusual for a manager to oversee professional staff without having the same credentials or training as staff members. Managers commonly provide oversight and guidance, while also relying on the professional judgment and experience of staff members. What is important to acknowledge is that those who are directly tasked with collection development each have a Master's-Library Science, management experience, and collectively have 50 years' experience in the area of collection development.

45. Question:

Will the Trustees entertain replacing the present leadership at ACPL if the Board determines that the Library is being steered in a direction that is contrary to its and the community's understanding of the mission, purpose and role of our Library?

Answer:

Questions related to Human Resources and/or specific employees are not open to public comment or debate.

46. Question:

Has the board asked for the resignation of Ms. Southard? If not, why not?

Answer:

Questions and issues related to Human Resources and/or specific employees are not open to public comment or debate.

47. Question:

What is the reasoning for hiring an outside firm to rewrite library job positions at great expense/funding for the public? Shouldn't their Human Resources Department handle this?

Answer:

The Library's Human Resources Department enlisted the aid of professionals who specialize in employee compensation. It has been 30+ years since employee pay levels and job descriptions were analyzed throughout the organization. It was important for ACPL to undertake this initiative for 2 reasons: a) bring job descriptions in line with the work actually being performed by the employee, and ensure that required skills and competencies are consistent with the work being done by each position; and b) ensure that our employees are being paid a competitive wage for the work they perform. In fields in which there is competition for good employees, it is important to offer wages that are in line with job

descriptions and competitive compared to other markets and organizations. This is a common practice in fields such as health care, IT, and library sciences.

48. Question:

Will staff be cut if less professionals are needed?

Answer:

ACPL has no plans to cut staff. All staff, including library professionals, play an important role in our library and our community. Please see the response above regarding the job description/compensation analysis.

Strategic Planning & Library Spaces

49. Question:

In a News Sentinel article dated 4/27/2018, Ms. Southard shared the vision of a consulting firm, Kimberly Bolan & Associates, hired by the ACPL. In the article, a proposal was made, based on the hired consultants' findings, to spend \$47,197,500 to improve the branches. This called for completely replacing Aboite and Dupont, as well as major renovations to most of the other branches and minor renovations to the rest. The main thrust was to create meeting and outdoor spaces.

How much did ACPL spend with this consulting firm? What about the \$84,000,000 in bond money spent less than 20 years ago during the 2002-2007 ACPL renovations?

Answer:

The consulting firm in question was contracted to provide facility assessments at each ACPL library location. The overall goal was to determine how those spaces are being used by the public; if those spaces have sufficient space to accommodate that usage; and what updates, if any, need to be undertaken. The fee for those services was \$55,781.21.

Not every ACPL location was included in the previous cycle of renovations. The Aboite and Dupont branches are two of ACPL's busiest locations, and were not included in the previous cycle of branch renovations. Both were assessed as part of this contract.

50. Question:

Since there were no questions on the public survey asking respondents whether they would prefer a popular materials model or whether they were willing to sacrifice part of the collection in favor of more programs and services, how can you claim the survey was fair? How can you point to the survey as proof of what the community wants?

Answer:

The survey and public stakeholder sessions associated with the strategic planning process were designed to solicit feedback on those practices and procedures that directly impact customer service and resources provided.

248 community members, ACPL staff members, and Board members attended the public sessions, and 1,241 completed surveys. The participants provided very specific feedback on the changing role of libraries and indicated needs which resulted in a more defined role for ACPL. Some of the feedback included:

- The library should be a community center where social gathering and collaboration is welcome and encouraged
- The library should be a venue for people to learn through research as well as through games.
- The library should be an information resource for community activity, programs, and events.
- There were many who wanted to voice their interest in always having physical books be a part of the library's offerings.

Specific areas that were expressed as being inadequate:

- Tutor space
- After hours meeting room space
- Need for collaboration space
- Quiet space and active space – a mix

51. Question:

During the strategic planning phase of 2017, focus groups that included the public were promised. According to the September 2017 Trustee minutes, there is no mention of the public attending any focus groups. Instead, the minutes reference two synthesis meetings and a retreat that consisted of “staff, community partners, and board members.”

Did any of the focus groups include members of the public? If so, how many? How many members of the public attended? Where were these focus groups held? How was it decided which members of the public would be included?

Answer:

Fifteen public forums were held during the strategic planning process. In addition to the forums listed below, one forum was held specifically for representatives from local nonprofit organizations, local government representatives, and other similar stakeholders. There was also a forum held offsite for the Burmese community, with a translator assisting the facilitator.

Allen County Public Library – Public Forums

Tuesday, August 14, 6:30-8pm
Pontiac Branch, 2215 S. Hanna Street, Fort Wayne

Tuesday, August 22, 6:30-8pm
Grabill Branch, 13521 State Street, Grabill

Wednesday, August 23, 1:30-3pm
Main Library, Room C
900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne

Wednesday, August 23, 6:30-8pm
Monroeville Branch, 115 Main Street, Monroeville

Thursday, August 24, 10:15-11:45am
Hessen Cassell Branch, 3030 E. Paulding Road, Fort Wayne

Thursday, August 24, 2:30-4pm and 6:30-8pm
Main Library, Room C
900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne

Wednesday, September 6, 10:15-11:45am 1:30-3pm 6:30-8pm
Main Library, Room A
900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne

Thursday, September 7, 10:15-11:45am 1:30-3pm
Main Library, Room C
900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne

Thursday, September 7, 6:30-8pm
Dupont Branch, 536 E. Dupont Road, Fort Wayne

Public forums were publicized through local television news; local radio; newspaper articles; and a column by Greta Southard that ran in the Journal Gazette on August 9, 2017.
<http://www.journalgazette.net/opinion/columns/20170809/transformativision>

There was no screening of whom was invited or allowed to attend these forums. Everyone was welcome. The only guidance given was that if ACPL staff chose to attend a public forum instead of one designed specifically for employees, they should approach the conversation as a customer, not a library professional.

52. Question:

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the strategic planning survey is where it fell on the timeline of events. According to internal emails and documents we are more than happy to provide, major collection changes began immediately after Ms. Southard assumed her role as director. In November of 2014, staff was told they would no longer have individual agency budgets. There would be one pot from which Collection HQ would decide which departments and branches received what and how much. In April of 2015, staff were told that “the weed process is changing...we will discard instead of weeding” effective 5/15/15. In April of 2016, at a Public Services Managers meeting, staff was informed, “roughly 25% of books will need to be discarded at ABT, DPT, GEO, LTL, TEC, and Main. 20% at all of the other locations.” In May of 2016, staff was directed to “complete as much weeding as possible in order to have items available for a massive book sale that will take place...during Three Rivers Festival.” In March of 2017, staff was told they would no longer be deciding which items to purchase for their branches and departments. While this will be “an unpleasant change. We will continue to reach out to you for information regarding your customers’ needs and interests through meetings, emails and branch visits.”

How is it that all of these strategic changes were already enacted BEFORE the survey and synthesis meetings took place in August of 2017? Was the Board of Trustees aware of these drastic changes taking place? If the strategic plan was already being implemented, what value did Mr. Cullin of Kimberly Bolan & Associates bring to the process? How much was his consulting fee? And how can the ACPL, in all good conscience, say that the library’s new direction was borne out of the strategic planning process, when in fact, major changes were already happening at least two years before?

Answer:

The examples listed above in the Petitioner’s commentary are not as a result of the strategic planning process, but instead changes in internal practices and operating procedures.

The strategic planning process was designed to solicit feedback on the practices and procedures directly impacting customer service and resources provided. What is the library doing well? What could we do better? What kind of community do you want to live in? What issues are most important to you? What should our area be known for, excel at? What will it take to make your visions a reality?

53. Question:

Finally, in a 2018 article for OCLC Next, Ms. Southard wrote, “sometimes, in order to change anything...you have to change everything.”

This quote, and the idea that everything that has gone before needs to be summarily pitched out, are deeply disrespectful, dismissive, and offensive. Without asking about or understanding the history of this institution and the well-reasoned philosophy that has guided it for decades, this director immediately imposed drastic changes that have affected

the entire community. The fact that years after the changes are implemented, a sham “strategic plan” was created to provide a rationale for those changes is indefensible. The public's trust in this institution has seriously eroded.

How do you intend to repair it, so that you can regain community support?

Answer:

In reference to Ms. Southard’s column, context is important. To that point, instead of quoting one line from a blog post that Ms. Southard wrote for OCLC, the Board would encourage you to read the Director’s blog post in its entirety. It can be found at: <http://www.oclc.org/blog/main/sometimes-to-change-anything-you-have-to-change-everything/>

In the blog piece, her motivations behind “changing everything” in the organization are clearly defined.

“Our partnership with OCLC for evaluative testing of the OCLC Wise community engagement system earlier this year came with a pivotal ‘aha’ moment. We realized that our current approach to library management had flaws. Our perspective changed; we’ve tended to view technical functions like acquisition, circulation, collection management, and reporting as stand-alone tasks, not as part of a whole toolset for customer service. Learning about Wise also prompted us to take a holistic review of the work we hope to accomplish and the need to eliminate organizational silos. So, even after everything we’ve gained in the strategic planning process, there’s still work to do.

Organizational change is a key component of why Wise is so attractive to our team—and why we’re excited to be the first adopter in the US. We know it will help, not hinder, our aspirations to be less fragmented among departments. The system supports the very important ongoing community conversation we started with our strategic planning—and this is critical because it’s the ‘why’ that needs to propel us forward.”

54. Question:

I filled out a survey with many of these concerns on the card. I handed it to the librarian. How do I know that my survey was even passed along and counted? Is there a collection of all of the responses that were turned in so that we can be certain that our voice was truly heard? Where can I find the results of the survey?

Answer:

During the survey process, staff were informed to compile all paper surveys and return them to administrative staff in the Director’s office. Those surveys were then given to the consultants hired to assist with the data gathering- both in paper form and through the public forums. The consultants compiled all of the analysis in aggregate form. The results of the survey, as well as feedback received via the public forums, are illustrated most clearly by the Library’s strategic plan.

55. Question:

Has ACPL paid independent contractors, consulting firms or other persons to explore options or ideas for renovating or replacing any ACPL branches? If so, please state the date(s) and amount(s) paid, and for what purpose?

Answer:

Kimberly Bowlen & Associates was contracted by the Library to conduct an assessment of the Library's branches, to gather data to further inform the strategic planning process. Through data and observation, we know the public is using our facilities differently than when the branches were originally built and/or remodeled. Their services were not engaged with any specific outcome in mind.

Their final report, delivered to the Board of Trustees, did recommend specific renovations at each library branch, as well as replacing the Aboite and Dupont locations. However, with the exception of cosmetic upgrades, no further action has been taken to institute the larger changes recommended. The total payment to Kimberly Bowlen & Associates in relation to the space assessment was \$55,781.21.

56. Question:

Why does a library institution of information materials and pleasure reading materials find it necessary to rid those materials that make it a LIBRARY to make room for public meeting spaces?

Answer:

The library is already viewed as a community center. Tens of thousands of non-Library sponsored programs and events took place in our spaces in 2018. Members of the community have also provided direct feedback regarding the important role the Library plays in providing public gathering spaces. They shared that:

- The library should be a community center where social gathering and collaboration is welcome and encouraged
- The library should be a venue for people to learn through research as well as through games.
- The library should be an information resource for community activity, programs, and events.
- There were many who wanted to voice their interest in always having physical books be a part of the library's offerings.

Specific areas that were expressed as being inadequate:

- Tutor space
- After hours meeting room space
- Need for collaboration space
- Quiet space and active space – a mix

Some branches have seen a decline in the use of physical materials by more than half in the last decade. This change provides an opportunity to rearrange spaces in various locations to better meet the growing demand for other types of services.

For those branches with high circulation rates, weeding allows them to free up space for items that will be used or checked out more frequently. High circulation locations need to free up space for new materials on a regular basis due to demand from customers usage rates.

57. Question:

Where exactly are these problem areas (editor's note: locations that are not ADA accessible), why were they not fixed sooner, and is purging items and removing shelving the only solution?

Answer:

In branch libraries, many of them feature shelving that is not stroller- or wheelchair-friendly. In the Main Library, certain areas do not allow wheelchair access. For these areas, removing shelving to allow for more space between shelves is the easiest and most cost-efficient solution.

58. Question:

Which branch does not have space for programs?

Answer:

All locations have a meeting room that is used by both Library staff and the community. In 2018, over 22,000 programs and events were held by non-Library groups and organizations. There is demand for more study and collaboration spaces.

59. Question:

Human interaction is extremely important. Can the Library systems provide space for innovators to meet and collaborate?

Answer:

The Library's goal system-wide is to balance the ability to provide materials the community wants while also providing spaces for study, meetings, and collaboration. Determining how the public is currently using our facilities, and how they would like to use our spaces, was the driving reason behind the facilities assessment recently undertaken at each of our locations.

Weeding

60. Question:

What has the Director told the Trustees the now empty shelf space at the Main and branch sites will be used for? What is the goal for use of this now empty space?

Answer:

Some branches have seen a decline in the use of physical materials by more than half in the last decade. This provides an opportunity to rearrange the space of the library to better meet the growing demand for other types of services.

For those branches with high circulation rates, weeding allows us to free up space for items that will be used or checked out more frequently. The high circulation locations need to free up space for new materials on a regular basis due to customer demand for these materials.

61. Question:

In October of 2017, a concerned ACPL patron attended a board meeting to express concern over collection development issues they believed were happening at multiple branches. Did the board address these concerns with the director or staff? Was there follow-up action taken to investigate their concerns?

Answer:

The library director and senior management team reviewed the concerns of the library customer and incorporated those concerns into ongoing discussions. This seemed appropriate as generalities were provided by the customer.

62. Question:

Was ACPL “broken”, in your determination, and in need of radical transformation, or was it working well up until the actions of the present “change agents” were launched?

Answer:

ACPL was not and is not “broken.” It has not undergone, and is not undergoing “radical transformation.” However, it is fair to say there is always room for improvement and introducing updated processes and new tools allow staff to better manage the Library’s collections and spaces in a more strategic, thoughtful, and intentional manner. This happens when an organization combines the professional expertise and judgment of staff with data. Many of the resources currently used were not available to previous administrations.

The following is a response from a Trustee: “The library is not a static place and never has been. From its beginning, it has grown to serve the needs of all of Allen County and beyond – whether through our world renowned genealogy collection or in helping recent immigrants integrate into our society. We are one library system with 15 locations to serve our

community. We are committed to providing services and resources, both at the locations and online as we move forward. We need to balance our resources and tax payer funds to properly serve this community and as a Board we welcome concerned and instructive input into determining that balance.”

63. Question:

How many books have been purged/weeded from the ACPL collections since Ms. Southard assumed the Director position at ACPL? Please provide the annual counts for 2014 to present. If books cannot be differentiated from other weeded materials, please provide an annual count for all materials purged/weeded from the ACPL collection.

Answer:

Historically, this data has not been tracked.

64. Question:

Will the Board authorize physical measurement of a few sections of the collection, with witnesses present?

Answer:

No. Fifteen years have passed since the original measurements were taken, measurements that used specific titles as markers. During that time period, sections of the collection have been shifted, moved, added to, and weeded. The Board does not believe taking physical measurements of the current collection would produce comparable results.

65. Question:

If it has been decided that one-fourth of the collection must die, will the Board tell us why? What will we gain from this discarding of resources? What will replace the absent books? What will be so valuable as to require the sacrifice of the heart of the collection?

Answer:

The Board and leadership of ACPL have not assigned a percentage or number of items in the collection that must be weeded. The ultimate goal is a vibrant, relevant collection that best serves the community at-large. The 25% figure referenced originated from a manager that is no longer with the organization.

66. Question:

How many actual books were present in the collection prior to 2014 and how many actual books are present now?

Answer:

Because of inaccurate data going back to at least 2003, there is no accurate figure for how many actual books were in the collection up to 2014. For the first time ever, physical inventories were conducted at each of the branches in 2018 and staff recently finished the inventory of the Main Library.

Because of that inventory, we now know our collection includes 2.4 million print books. This does not include other non-print items in the collection.

67. Question:

Have the trustees met with and questioned any ACPL library employees and asked them if they have ever been given a list from Collection HQ and told to simply weed and discard the books on that list? Have you ever asked any library employees that are not librarians if they have done any weeding? Have you met with employees and asked about practices that they were directed to do that they disagreed with? Have you invited employees to share their concerns with you? If not, when will you do so?

Answer:

Board members have had various conversations with staff across the system on the process of weeding, concerns around weeding, etc. Board members have also attended informational sessions on Collection HQ, how discard reports are generated, etc. These meetings have included the expertise of front-line managers, members of the Collection Development Team, Material Support Services, and senior leadership. A board member also had a “tutorial session” on the topic of weeding with a front-line manager.

Employees can contact Board members via the Trustees@acpl.info email address, and several have done so.

68. Question:

What is the job title of persons selecting the weeding titles? Do they work as a voting team? How are they held accountable? How is the process held accountable?

Answer:

Only professional librarians are allowed to make the final determination of whether or not an item is discarded or retained in the collection. The responsibility is incorporated into the job descriptions for the various positions. It is apparent that the process has not been carried out consistently across the system as intended. Additional communication, training, and safeguards will be put into place to ensure staff are aware of weeding expectations.

69. Question:

How are the weeding titles determined?

Answer:

An item may be subject to weeding if it is damaged, grubby, contains outdated information, or has low circulation.

70. Question:

Why are there empty shelves? Why weed when there are empty shelves?

Answer:

There may be a number of reasons for empty shelves. Some shelves formerly holding recently weeded materials will soon hold new materials; shoe shelves will be removed to make all of our facilities ADA compliant; and some shelves will be removed and/or repositioned to provide for appropriate meeting and programming spaces at all of our facilities.

71. Question:

What is the percentage of information, nonfiction type materials weeded?

Answer:

Because records have not been kept of specific items that have been removed from the system, there is no way of knowing if they were fiction, nonfiction, magazines, music CDs, DVDs, etc. ACPL is transitioning to the new operating system Wise in July 2019. That system will provide greater reporting capabilities that will allow us to determine what type of item has been discarded and why.

72. Question:

What is the percentage of fiction type materials weeded?

Answer:

Please see response to previous question.

73. Question:

Content of weeding has been very vague. Books in poor condition, but are called for. Are they replaced?

Answer:

If books are in poor condition, but are still circulating frequently, they may be replaced. The responsibility for requesting replacements falls to the branch or department manager, working in coordination with members of the Collection Development Team.

74. Question:

Why are there SO many empty shelves at my Woodburn Branch Library?

Answer:

There may be a number of reasons for empty shelves. Some shelves formerly holding recently weeded materials will soon hold new materials; some shelves will be removed to make all of our facilities ADA compliant; and some shelves will be removed and/or repositioned to provide for appropriate meeting and programming spaces at all of our facilities.

Once empty shelves are removed, those spaces will be used in a manner that is being discussed as a team with the branch manager- who has received feedback from her team - the Youth Services Coordinator, and the Public Services Manager.

75. Question:

WHO decides to pluck books off the shelves of each library and WHY?

Answer:

Only professional librarians are allowed to make the final determination of whether or not an item is discarded or retained in the collection. The responsibility is incorporated into the job descriptions for the various positions. It is apparent that the process has not been carried out consistently across the system as intended. Additional communication, training, and safeguards will be put into place to ensure that staff are aware of expectations surrounding weeding.

76. Question:

Why would it be better to have empty shelves in a Library rather than have books that may not have been checked out in a few months?

Answer:

For some locations that have seen their circulation figures drop by half over the past decade, clearing shelves allows the Library to reconfigure spaces for increased public use.

77. Question:

Have you kept records (numbers, titles, dates of discard) of the books that have been weeded? If so, is that information available to the public?

Answer:

Historically, no such records have been kept.

78. Question:

WHERE do our books go?

Answer:

Books that are weeded but are not damaged or grubby are sent to the Friends of the Library book sale. Those sales raise money to support staff education, programs and events within the Library, and community outreach. Books not sold by the Friends may be redirected for donation to sites such as Fort Wayne Housing Authority; donated to Goodwill; or sent to Internet Archive for digitization.

79. Question:

Please provide the titles to the books that were discarded during the weeding process.

Answer:

Historically, no such records have been kept.

80. Question:

Who are the 180 librarians Greta mentioned and when did they use their judgment on which items to weed?

Answer:

The figure listed above is a misunderstanding of Greta’s statement. ACPL employs 105 professional librarians. Of those, 75 have MLS degrees.

According to job descriptions for their positions, librarians are charged with participating in and/or overseeing the weeding of materials. They are to use their professional discretion and judgment in determining whether or not to discard or retain an item.

81. Question:

Please provide a list of books that were discarded in 2018.

Answer:

Historically, no such records have been kept.

82. Question:

Do any (or all) of you who make up the ACPL Board of Trustees, agree that the amount of collection weeding ACPL has experienced in the last 5 years or so, is sufficient to give adequate space for the ACPL collection for the next 5-10 years? Why or why not?

Answer:

The following is a response from a Trustee: “While we are not professional librarians, we are stewards of the library for the entire community. As we fulfill our duties and address concerns, we must remain mindful of our role. As a board, we do not manage the library directly. We work as a team with our director and her staff to serve all citizens of Allen County. We will continue to do so and will be open to all concerned as we balance the needs of everyone who uses our fantastic library.

83. Question:

Do you as individual ACPL trustees, agree that there has been enough weeding of the collection since 2016 to the point where weeding needs to be drastically reduced to a minimal level semipermanently, for the sake of preservation, and particularly until we have actual statistics and reports about what types and amounts of materials are being chosen for discard and according to what specifications? In light of the amount of collection

downsizing in the past five years, will you consider putting a stop to any further downsizing of the collection for the next five years?

Answer:

The Board is not comprised of professional librarians or other library staff. As a Board, we have been tasked with providing oversight and governance regarding policy and overall strategy. We defer the oversight of the collection to ACPL leadership and professional staff, working together to determine what is appropriate.

84. Question:

Can it be written into formal policy that professional librarians are the final decision makers in the weeding process?

Answer:

We do not believe this is not necessary as job descriptions for professional librarians already include very specific duties in terms of weeding and collection management.

85. Question:

Will the library review and lengthen its weeding timelines?

Answer:

Yes. The ongoing review and adjustment of weeding timelines is an existing part of the process. A regular review will be undertaken by members of senior management and front-line managers.

86. Question:

Why is it acceptable for the director NOT to have kept track of the books she discarded? Are we expected to believe that books, as they go out the door, cannot be counted? These are not intangible records, but actual physical books that people held in their hands, packed up and shipped out. The status of each and every books was also changed to DISCARD in the computer. Yet, why does the board continue to turn a blind eye to what appears to be irresponsible inventory management?

Answer:

Historically, this information has not been tracked, including under previous administrations.

87. Question:

Will the board and the director commit to restore the American Library Association's recommended practice of having a professional librarian make the final decision as to what is discarded and what is bought?

Answer:

It already is the expectation that professional librarians determine what items will be discarded or retained. These responsibilities are included in job descriptions for professional staff.

88. Question:

What was the amount of revenue generated from the sale of the books?

Answer:

In 2018, the Friends of the Library raised \$58,062.85 from the sale of books and other items. This money is re-invested directly into ACPL staff development, programs, events, and community engagement efforts.

89. Question:

If sold, where does the money go and is there transparent accounting of the cost paid to buy the books, books, purged, and monies coming in from purged books?

Answer:

Items are sold through the Friends of the ACPL, an independent non-profit organization that exists to support the Library's staff development, programs, events, and community engagement efforts.

90. Question:

Some time ago, I was informed by an ACPL staff member that there was pressure to reduce the number of books on shelves. In particular, something like six inches of open space was required at the end of each shelf. This policy seems to me to be quite negative, sacrificing space for book display to create an artificial appearance of neatness. **What is the reason for such a policy?**

Answer:

The practice to which you refer has not been codified as ACPL policy. It was a recommendation made by a former manager. However, open space at the end of each shelf is a common practice in libraries, allowing staff to display and highlight new and or topical items in the collection. It contributes to "moments of serendipity" for customers who are browsing shelves looking for their next read.

91. Question:

According to data from the ACPL “Myth vs. Fact” sheet, items from storage appear to have been accessed hundreds of thousands of times in the last 10 years. Isn’t that proof that less popular items are still sought after and discretion should be exercised more carefully in choosing what to discard?

Answer:

Items in storage, with the exception of government documents, are available for customers to check out or use in-house. There is no dispute about the value of items. However, it is true that hundreds of thousands of items currently in storage have not circulated in at least ten years – many of them for 20 years or more.

Just as in other areas of the library, professional librarians are charged with using their judgment and expertise to determine which items in storage should be discarded or retained. While support staff may use reports to indicate which books in storage are eligible for weeding, the final decision to retain or discard each item is made by the librarians. For example, just as the librarians in Children’s Services make weeding decisions regarding items in their department, they are also responsible for those decisions for items in Juvenile Storage.

92. Question:

One of the Trustees said items that can be hurtful are removed. Who directly, not in general, sets the standards of hurtful? What is the determining factor of hurtful?

Answer:

If an item contains outdated information that might be harmful, that item is removed from the collection. For example, old texts might refer to the fact that it is safe to smoke and drink alcohol during pregnancy. We regularly have customers turn to the Library for information following a medical diagnosis. And because of the rapid changes in medical practices and science, what is acceptable one day may be disproven the next. Materials that might contain outdated medical or scientific information are removed and replaced with new, accurate materials.

93. Question:

Is it possible that necessary weeding titles can be digitally made public for purchase other than current mixed Friends of the Library shelves, etc.? It may create new positions and library revenue. That process may also alleviate fears of treasured titles lost forever.

Answer:

The online sale of materials through vendors such as Amazon have been explored. Friends of the Library from other library systems use such outlets to sell books. However, it was determined it would be both labor and time-intensive for volunteers and/or staff. And therefore has been put on hold at this time.

94. Question:

What exactly was the question that indicated the need to purge items in order to make room for more furniture? (Editor's note: this refers to the survey related to strategic planning.)

Answer:

Section 3 of the survey dealt with Library use. Is there adequate space? Is it clean and comfortable? Is it easy to navigate? Customers also provided feedback through survey responses and in the public forum on the following:

- The library should be a community center where social gathering and collaboration is welcome and encouraged
- The library should be a venue for people to learn through research as well as through games.
- The library should be an information resource for community activity, programs, and events.

Specific areas that were expressed as being inadequate:

- Tutor space
- After hours meeting room space
- Need for collaboration space
- Quiet space and active space – a mix

95. Question:

Using a computer program to recommend materials to be discarded with little or no opportunity by the professional librarians' oversight and review is, in my view, unconscionable? Was the board aware and did it approve this practice?

Answer:

Professional librarians use the data as a tool to assist in the weeding process, not to make the final decision. In the past, librarians would pull each item from the shelf, scan it, and review the record for the date it last circulated, how many times it had circulated, etc. Collection HQ merely compiles that same information into a single report. Ultimately, it is still left to the professional judgment and discretion of librarians as to whether an item will be discarded or retained.

96. Question:

Exactly what charity shops were some discarded books donated to?

Answer:

Goodwill.

RFID

97. Question:

We know that 25% of certain branches, and 20% of other branches' collections, are being weeded to prepare for RFID. Please explain to us why RFID is so valuable to you.

Answer:

RFID is a tracking system that would replace the current barcode system. A former ACPL manager was in favor of transitioning to RFID. Meeting notes document this employee made a connection between weeding and preparation for an RFID system. *However, the move to RFID was never approved by Senior Management. A transition to that system would have been unnecessary, and there are no plans to implement RFID technology at ACPL.*

98. Question:

Additionally, as members of the ACPL Board of Trustees, do any of you believe that some of that percentage which has been or may continue to be weeded to prepare for the new RFID, is more valuable than the RFID being implemented?

Answer:

RFID is a tracking system that would replace the current barcode system. A former ACPL manager was in favor of transitioning to RFID. Meeting notes document that the employee made a connection between weeding and preparation for an RFID system. *However, the move to RFID was never approved by Senior Management. A transition to that system would have been unnecessary, and there are no plans to implement RFID technology at ACPL.*

99. Question:

Thirdly what are all of the specific reasons you feel the current library material management system is insufficient and needs replaced with RFID?

Answer:

RFID is a tracking system that would replace the current barcode system. A former ACPL manager was in favor of transitioning to RFID. Meeting notes document that the employee made a connection between weeding and preparation for an RFID system. *However, the move to RFID was never approved by Senior Management. A transition to that system would have been unnecessary, and there are no plans to implement RFID technology at ACPL.*

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

100. Question:

Is the Board aware that, in the recent past, the Library routinely purchased from hundreds of vendors in any given year? If so, does the Board feel that only 60 vendors provide the breadth of coverage and diversity of opinion or information sufficient to meet the needs of the Allen County citizens?

Answer:

In the past, individual branch and department managers placed their own material orders, through a larger number of vendors. By moving to centralized collection, staff reduced the number of vendors, can order in bulk, and the in turn save money for additional resources purchases.

101. Question:

Did the Board make a specific decision to transition to a Kendallville-type library or did that transition begin naturally? Is this the considered Board policy? If so, was the Board presented with a range of possible “visions” and with information...or with just the Director’s preferred vision? If it was a considered, informed decision, what can we say to have it readdressed?

Answer:

This response assumes this question is in reference to an alleged shift in philosophy toward a popular collection.

In the library profession, the classification of “general popular interest” reflects the audience or customers and not how popular the materials are. Library classifications vary from popular, academic, to trade professionals. Under this classification, the vast majority of libraries in this country are popular libraries. The Allen County Public Library is not an academic library like Indiana University or Purdue Fort Wayne. And it is not a technical library although we house technical materials. It has always been a library that houses materials intended for a general audience.

The concerns expressed over a philosophy shift boils down to the library and other citizens using the same term but defining it differently. ACPL provides a variety of materials in different formats. That hasn’t changed. It is true that library staff is taking advantage of the data-gathering tools available to them to determine the interests of customers and community. Staff analyze patterns in customers’ usage to determine what types of materials will circulate and in what form they should come. And purchasing is made in concert with these determinations.

102. Question:

Has the redefinition of the purpose of the ACPL collection “to provide the most high-demand and high-interest materials for the community” been in any way influenced by the people who sell books and other media to the ACPL?

Answer:

No. It is based on circulation data – what customers use, check out, and request.

103. Question:

The 2018 Collection Development policy states “Scholarly and highly technical or specialized materials are not acquired.” Could the ACPL elucidate what material it does and doesn’t consider “scholarly?”

Answer:

Textbooks and materials of a highly technical or specialized nature are more appropriate for research or special libraries and are generally excluded from the collection. Scholarly and highly technical or specialized materials are not acquired by the Library but are made available through the Library’s interlibrary loan service depending on availability.

104. Question:

Doesn’t the 2018 Collection Development Policy’s tone cast an ambivalent and unnecessary attitude towards those who aspire to be scholarly as part of their lifelong discovery? Isn’t aspiring to be scholarly a trait that should be encouraged by a public library system?

Answer:

The policy does not discourage scholarly pursuit. It does define what is appropriate for a public, community-oriented library such as ACPL to purchase, using taxpayer dollars.

Textbooks and materials of a highly technical or specialized nature are more appropriate for research or special libraries and are generally excluded from the collection. Scholarly and highly technical or specialized materials are not acquired by the Library but are made available through the Library’s interlibrary loan service depending on availability.

105. Question:

Could the ACPL make a statement in support or opposition to the 7th point of the American Library Association’s Freedom to Read Statement?

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a “bad” book is a good one, the answer to a “bad” idea is a good one. The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader’s purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by

which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publisher and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

Answer:

ACPL provides a broad choice of circulating print and non-print materials selected to accommodate the diversity of tastes, reading levels, and interests of users of all ages. Realizing the importance of printed books has also led ACPL to expand community engagement efforts outside of our facilities, to reduce barriers and increase access to books. These efforts include Team Read; delivering books to Level 1 and Level 2 daycare centers; delivering books to Park Center, Boys & Girls Club, and the Juvenile Detention Center.

106. Question:

Doesn't the ACPL have both the space and budget to allow for at least some priority to be given to both the acquisition and preservation of books of depth and intellectual/artistic/scientific importance, by virtue of their literary, historical, intellectual or scientific value?

Answer:

When choosing materials to purchase, ACPL staff consider many factors such as customer interest, cost, and space. They also take into account anticipated or existing demand, local interest, reputation and skill of the author, performer, or artist, existing library resources in the subject area, published reviews, availability of titles from other sources, and the physical durability of the item.

In an attempt to better understand the true value of items in our collection, the Library has recently purchased a tool that provides data on the value of items and which libraries in our peer group do or do not have those items. This tool allows ACPL to objectively determine the value of items, and whether they are valuable because of rarity or financial value. If an item is deemed valuable for either of those reasons, it is taken out of circulation and retained in the Fine Book Room.

107. Question:

Aren't neighborhoods with low income and low literacy rates especially in need of leadership from their local branch libraries? Don't these neighborhoods need specific efforts to encourage literacy that would include branch management of its collection, rather than mandated the collection size based on circulation data?

Answer:

Libraries do indeed serve an important role, especially in areas where there might be barriers to access of books and other materials; technology such as computers or Wi-Fi; or high-quality programs. That is why the library has placed an increased emphasis on

community engagement, taking our resources to those who need them most but might never visit a library location.

Branch managers serving areas and neighborhoods where barriers exist also acknowledge that personal interactions and services provided to their customers are often more valuable than what their location's collection holds.

108. Question:

Aren't the branch managers hamstrung by high discard quotas in such areas? Isn't the ACPL surrendering its responsibility and the opportunity to lead in lower income neighborhoods, or any neighborhood, by the current collection development policy?

Answer:

There were, and are, no quotas demanded for weeding. The term "quota" implies consequences for not meeting the designated amount of items to discard. Goals were established by the Public Services Manager, however, no employee has been disciplined, written up, etc. for not reaching branch or department's goals.

The branch libraries serve neighborhoods and specific communities in Allen County. The interests and needs of the actual and potential users of the branch are continually evaluated so that each library has a collection reflecting the evolving interests of the community that it serves. While the branch collection meets some of the basic information needs of its neighborhood, it does not duplicate the in-depth resources or special collections of the main library. For additional information, please see the response to the previous question.

109. Question:

Isn't the enthusiasm for being enriched through "lifelong discovery," stated as the mission of the ACPL, dampened when ardent patrons of our public library system are aware that books are preserved exclusively by virtue of their checkout rates?

Answer:

Books are not preserved exclusively due to circulation data. If an item has not circulated at one branch, it might be sent to another branch, where data indicates it will have a higher likelihood of usage. It is also important that professional librarians use their judgment and expertise to determine if a book, despite lack of circulation, should be retained in the collection.

110. Question:

Are income levels and media savviness being taken into account by those tasked with acquiring non-print media so that materials will still be available in formats for all patrons (e.g. DVD availability)?

Answer:

Not all movies are being released on DVD anymore; they are only available on Blu-Ray, and it is cost-prohibitive to buy copies of movies that are already available digitally through platforms such as Hoopla. This applies mostly to niche materials.

When possible, movies are purchased in combo packs that include both DVDs and Blu-Ray discs. In 2018, it was still a 5:1 ratio of DVDs purchased compared to Blu-Ray. The reality, however, is the industry is moving in the direction of Blu-Rays and away from DVDs.

111. Question:

With 304,839 card-holders (Southard 2017 interview with Kevin Leininger) isn't the ACPL too large a library system with too many diverse users to have a collection policy which stipulates that books are preserved solely through their checkout rates?

Answer:

Books are not preserved exclusively due to circulation data. The fact that ACPL is one system with 14 locations provides the library with greater flexibility in finding a "second life" for an item. If material has not circulated at one branch, it might be sent to another branch, where data indicates it will have a higher likelihood of usage. It is also important that professional librarians use their judgment and expertise to determine if a book, despite lack of circulation, should be retained in the collection.

112. Question:

With the 2018 revised collection policy, isn't the ACPL surrendering any obligation or responsibility to offer leadership in nurturing the intellectual development of the patrons of the ACPL system past basic literacy?

Answer:

ACPL provides a broad choice of circulating print and non-print materials selected to accommodate the diversity of tastes, reading levels, and interests of users of all ages. Each year, far more titles than the Library can afford to purchase are published in print, audiovisual, and electronic formats. Therefore, staff must be selective in what they choose for the library's collection and consider factors such as customer interest, cost, and space. They also take into account anticipated or existing demand, local interest, reputation and skill of the author, performer, or artist, existing library resources in the subject area, published reviews, availability of titles from other sources, and the physical durability of the item.

113. Question:

According to the Collection Development policy of 2018, the Trustees agreed to change the scope of the branch libraries to a popular “current high interest needs of library customers.” When you agreed to this, did you realize that the children’s non-fiction section would be slashed to about 2 rows of books over all non-fiction topics?

Answer:

The Board assumes this question is in reference to a specific branch location. We have every expectation that with older, unused, or out of date materials having been discarded, new materials will be acquired to that reflect the needs of the branch. With that being said, it is important to remember that while the branch collection meets the basic information needs of its neighborhood, it does not duplicate the in-depth resources or special collections of the main library.

114. Question:

Who is overseeing the three people/computer that is selecting our new books? How are they vetted? Do they have a bias/agenda when stocking our shelves with new material? How is this process overseen? What are the checks and balances set in place for our library?

Answer:

The members of the Collection Development Team are overseen by the Collection and Information Technology Manager, who also serves as a member of the Library’s senior leadership. Each of the three members of CDT have a Master’s degree in Library Science, have held management positions, and have a 50 years’ of combined experience in the area of collection development.

At no point does personal bias come into play when materials are chosen. As an institution, ACPL is charged with offering materials that appeal to diverse audiences and viewpoints. Each year, far more titles than the Library can afford to purchase are published in print, audiovisual, and electronic formats. Therefore, staff must be selective in what they choose for the library’s collection and consider factors such as customer interest, cost, and space. They also take into account anticipated or existing demand; local interest; reputation and skill of the author, performer, or artist; existing library resources in the subject area; published reviews; availability of titles from other sources; and the physical durability of the item.

115. Question:

Can we have books come out of storage and be available to browse on the shelves instead of stuck in a basement? Could we use a section of now empty shelves in each branch to offer these books as an option to read?

Answer:

Librarians already have the option of requesting books from storage. That is an established option.

116. Question:

According to the Collection Development policy of 2018 Philosophy of Access, “all cardholders, regardless of age, have the right to access all materials in the library,” so does that mean that my 14 (sic) can check out an R rated movie with no questions asked? If they try to go to the movie theater or video rental store, they have to show proper ID. Why not follow the same procedure?

Answer:

The Library values its users’ privacy, regardless of age. As stated in the policy:

“All cardholders, regardless of age, have the right to access all materials in the Library and to borrow any circulating item as governed by the Circulation Policy. Parents and legal guardians have the responsibility to monitor the use of library materials by their children. Selection of library materials for adults is not limited by the possibility that children may come in contact with the items. The Library does not act in loco parentis and is not responsible for inadvertent viewing at the library.

Library items are categorized broadly for the purpose of locating them in the adult, teen, children’s or special collections. Otherwise, they are not marked or identified to indicate a suggested audience.”

If the caregiver of a minor child does not want the child to check out certain materials, it is the responsibility of the caregiver to oversee that decision.

117. Question:

Was a monetary value ever assigned to the ACPL’s collection for any reason? If so, what was the value for each year, 2014 to 2018?

Answer:

Per the ACPL’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), the accounting value of the collection for those years is listed below. This is the accounting value of the actual depreciable materials. These are items owned by the ACPL, not items like ebooks, audiobooks, database etc. that are usually subscriptions and are not considered “owned” by the library.

Library materials are depreciated over a 3-year period so even though the books will still be in our collection after 3 years, there would be no accounting value to them and would not be included in the values listed below.

2014 - \$8,765,431
2015 - \$8,869,660
2016 - \$9,063,886
2017 - \$8,781,259
2018 - \$8,126,284

The value of the Rare Book Collection that does not get depreciated for those years would have been \$994,827.

118. Question:

What percentage of the ACPL collection consists of books, what percentage is DVDs/CDs, what percentage is other materials? Please provide percentage for each year 2014 to present.

Answer:

Because of inaccurate data reported to the Indiana State Library going back as far as 2003, there is no accurate total for books prior to 2018 when a physical inventory was performed at all ACPL locations.

According to ACPL's 2018 annual report, the collection included:

- 2.4 million print books
- 164,039 e-books
- 91,627 videos (includes DVD, Blu-Ray, VHS, Playaway video)
- 70,703 audio (includes CD, DVD, audiobooks,MP3, Playaway books)

119. Question:

How does centralized collection keep the "delay in circulation" from happening as was stated in the meeting?

Answer:

Centralized collection development means that the correct number and type of materials are more efficiently ordered, cataloged and processed, and hence, available to customers more quickly.

120. Question:

Whose decisions was it to purchase these games (editor's note: board game) and did that person receive ANY type of reward or payback for doing so?

Answer:

One member of the Collection Development Team is responsible for acquiring non-print materials for the library system. This CDT member, in consultation with branches that now offer board games, was responsible for selecting and purchasing the board games.

That same CDT member did not receive any type of reward or payback for selecting and purchasing the board games. The only reward is satisfaction from providing a resource to customers who might not otherwise be able to afford it.

121. Question:

How much more expensive is it to house physical books vs. electronic books on servers?

Answer:

ACPL pays a yearly hosting fee of \$12,000 to our electronic book vendors. They host over 417,000 titles for our customers to checkout. That means it costs us less than 3 cents per title to house electronic books per year.

In 2018, ACPL reported 2.4 million print books. Using an average cost of \$4.26 per book, it costs \$10.22 million to house print books on an annual basis.

122. Question:

With electronic content in mind, are we thinking too small to have an Allen County collection? Should we be thinking larger such as a state wide, nation wide, or even international collection?

Answer:

Because ACPL subscribes to electronic resources such as Overdrive, Hoopla, and Freegal, in a sense it does have access to electronic content that is larger than Allen County. In 2018, Overdrive featured 67,779 titles, while Hoopla offered 619,656 titles. These include e-books, audiobooks, movies, and music. In Freegal, materials change daily because there are thousands of musicians and tens of thousands of albums that allow customers to have access to millions of songs to stream and/or download.

123. Question:

How would you describe the value to this community of the ACPL's world-class collection?

Answer:

The Board is proud to serve an organization as important to the life of the community as the Library is. In order to achieve a higher value, it is important that the collection is both well-managed and well-used.

124. Question:

What will you do to preserve the collection?

Answer:

As a Board, it is our responsibility to provide guidance and oversight of strategy, and to approve policies. The 2018 Collection Development Policy clearly states the intended scope of collections at main library and branches; how items are selected and deselected; and special collections held by the Library. The Board is currently reviewing an updated Collection Development Policy which retains language on the previously mentioned items, while also addressing how the collection will be maintained going forward.

The following is a response from a Trustee: “We do need to emphasize our role in the library. The board as a body sets policy. We delegate the execution of that policy to our director, who by legal authority, must have a MLS degree. The director has the responsibility to implement our policy in conjunction with the entire staff. We have 105 staff members who are professionally educated librarians. Each will have a diverse viewpoint drawn from their differing experiences, but the objective is for each to be heard as they work with the director to implement the policies. Ultimately the Board sets those policies.”

125. Question:

The 1992 Resource Development Policy stated, “Materials included in the collection present all points of view on current and historical issues and inclusive portrayals of human experience in a wide variety of media styles. The origin, background or viewpoint of an author does not exclude the author’s work from the collection. Partisan or doctrinal disapproval does not result in exclusion or removal of a work from the collection”...The 2018 Collection Development Policy states “the purpose of the library’s collection is to provide the most high-demand and high-interest materials for the community.” This statement does not address the values of intellectual freedom. **Have you abandoned the concept of intellectual freedom? If not, where is it stated in the 2018 policy?**

Answer:

The Board and leadership of ACPL strongly support libraries’ roles in protecting and encouraging intellectual freedom. ACPL is dedicated to providing information regardless of format. Quoting from the 2018 collection policies, we offer “a strong collection that supports the information needs of Allen County residents. A broad choice of circulating print and non-print materials is selected to accommodate the diversity of tastes, reading levels, and interests of users of all ages.”

126. Question:

In the 1992 Resource Development Policy, “Current usefulness and public demand” and “Permanent value” are listed in the Selection Criteria. **Why was “permanent value” eliminated as criterion for collecting or keeping books? Are great books of literature no longer deemed worthy of keeping because they may circulate less frequently?**

Answer:

The Library is invested in retaining and protecting items that are of value, whether in terms of monetary value or rarity. That is why the ACPL subscribes to a tool called GreenGlass which allows us to examine our entire collection in comparison to other libraries across the country. Is an item truly rare? Or are there many copies? And if an item is valuable, should it be removed from circulation and/or kept in ACPL’s Fine Book Room?

The utilization of such a tool reflects the Library’s desire to be mindful and deliberative in the process of maintaining the collection.

127. Question:

The 2018 Collection Development Policy states, “Frankness of language and/or graphic content is not considered sufficient justification in itself to remove or restrict library items or formats. Titles with viewpoints or content deemed objectionable by a resident are judged as entire works, not on isolated passages or sections.” **Does this statement imply that the ACPL will remove a controversial work based on the entire work? Are you planning to censor certain works? If so, please explain.**

Answer:

The question only quotes a portion of the 2018 policy. The reconsideration process is only initiated by a complaint from a community member. The preceding section reads:

“Residents of Allen County may request the reconsideration of an item in the library’s collection. Procedures have been established which ensure the serious review of a resident’s request for reconsideration. Until a decision is reached, an item will remain in the collection.”

There is a documented procedure for how reconsideration of an item is carried out. It is conducted by a committee of library professionals and is not subject to one staff member’s personal preferences or biases.

128. Question:

Does the Board believe that the transition from ACPL's decades-long legacy as a public research model library to a much diminished popular materials collection model is the right for the ACPL? If so, I would like to know why the Board believes this is the best plan. And, if not, will an alternative plan be implemented that would attempt to restore the collection materials that have been lost?

Answer:

ACPL has always been, and continues to be, a community library. Though it has a variety of research materials and resources, as well as special collections, it has never been a research model library. The American Library Association has a clearly defined set of requirements for library to be classified as an Academic or Research Library. Only two public library systems meet these requirements: New York Public Library and Boston Public Library.

129. Question:

Does the Board believe, and will you be willing to advocate for taxpayers, that the ACPL has a far different mission and purpose than just to be a bookstore of current hard-cover books and other high-circulation materials?

Answer:

ACPL is not a bookstore, but we do offer materials in a variety of formats, on a wide range of topics – at no cost. Our mission is not profit and community based: enriching the community through lifelong learning and discovery. Our staff are able to assist with reference questions and help customers find a wealth of resources.

130. Question:

How many times has each individual Trustee visited each branch library, not for a meeting (example: walking directly to the meeting room and out the door when over) but as a patron, looking for a specific subject or to browse for a “new favorite” throughout the past year or so? What has your individual reaction been to the changes? Can you find what you are looking for? Think of a non-fiction topic that you loved as a child. How many books are on your branch shelf for you to explore? I challenge each of you to pretend that you are a 4-6 grader, assigned a history/science topic, and see how many books would you be able to find for your project at that branch? Now imagine that your whole grade/class has been given the assignment at the same time? Will you find what you need at Little Turtle or Woodburn or Grabill?

Answer:

The following is a response from a Trustee: “As a board, we have all had various interactions and relationships with the entire library system over decades. Some are lifelong residents of Allen County and grew up using the library and some chose to live here because of Allen County's great attributes, including the library. It is fair to say that some board members are

very active users of the entire library while others use it only occasionally. All in all, we represent a fair cross section of the citizens of Allen County in how we use the entire system.

We were asked about our resources for school projects at local branches, especially in our more outlying locations. This highlights the need for communication between our branches, especially Main, and the schools so we can timely anticipate those needs.”

131. Question:

Is it really the intention of this board to turn our library into a popular materials and meeting house?

Answer:

In the library industry, the concept of “general popular interest” reflects the audience, not how popular the materials are. Library classifications include popular, academic, or trade professional. By that definition, the vast number of libraries in this country are popular libraries. The Allen County Public Library is not an academic library like IU or Purdue. And, we are not a technical library. ACPL has always been a library that houses materials intended for a general audience.

ACPL provides a variety of materials in different formats. That hasn’t changed. It is true that library staff are taking advantage of data-gathering tools available to them to determine what the interests of the customers and community. Staff analyze patterns in customers’ library usage to determine what types of materials will circulate and what form they should come in.

With regard to the concern about turning the Library into a meeting house, the reality is our community has already moved us in that direction. In 2018, the Library sponsored 3,872 programs in our facilities. (An additional 935 library programs were held off-site.) Consider that in addition to 22,397 non-Library sponsored programs and events that took place at our various locations. The public views the Library as an important gathering space. As an institution, the Library is merely trying to meet the already existing and constantly growing need.

132. Question:

I am curious if there is a contract with the company to whom we are buying books that was mentioned at the meeting, and if there is any required quota of books or resources and types of books or resources that must be purchased.

Answer:

ACPL has a contract with Baker & Taylor, but it does not state a minimum number of books to purchase or amount to spend in order to receive the negotiated discount. In fact, Baker & Taylor representatives have clearly stated in the past that they would never ask ACPL to meet a minimum threshold. The Library’s other major vendor, Ingram, does have a minimum

requirement for the year to receive the negotiated discount, but it is so low that it is easily reached. ACPL's discounts for both vendors are identical.

133. Question:

Also, is there someone from that company who is guiding the library in its recommendations for how it would like the library to be configured in the layout.

Answer:

No. All determinations are made by ACPL professional staff.

134. Question:

Also hoping you would be able to give me the name of the company to whom ACPL is working with.

Answer:

We assume that the company related to this question is Baker & Taylor.

135. Question:

We keep hearing that library users "vote" for what they want every time they use their library card. But isn't this simplistic standard weighted in favor of a popular materials model? What if someone prefers a broad and deep collection with many books available on a wide range of topics? How can a person "vote" for that? They can't possibly check out every book in the library; there are rules against that. Isn't this "vote-with-your-library-card" yardstick just another example of the dumbing down of our culture?

Answer:

The Board believes it is possible to provide the type of collection referenced in the question, while at the same time ensuring that ACPL is being a good steward of taxpayer dollars. In one year alone, \$800,000 was spent purchasing items that either never circulated or were only checked out once. As Board members and fellow taxpayers, we don't believe it the best use of the community's dollars. So, while it is important to offer materials that reflect the depth and breadth of the collection, it is important to pay attention to what items the community wants.

LAST COPY

136. Question:

Was the Board aware or informed of the importance of the last copy policy to the historic development of the ACPL collection before the decision to abandon it was made? If so, what were the reasons for choosing to abandon the policy?

Answer:

It has not been official ACPL policy to keep the last copy of items. While the practice has been referred to in speeches given by a former Director, and there were some staff who supported the idea, it was never codified or followed consistently throughout the library system.

It is also not an idea the majority of branch managers and the main library support. The idea was discussed at the April 16, 2019 management meeting. The intended participants of the monthly management meeting are all managers throughout the system. The following is the conclusion from that meeting which was relayed to the Board:

“The suggestion was made at the management team meeting of incorporating last copy language to formalize the retention of a last copy. One manager was clearly in favor of this, a few branch managers thought that Main department managers were already doing this; however, Main managers (with the exception of one department who proposed the idea) said they were not in favor of this and that they currently were not retaining the last copy, nor did they want to do so in the future. This past practice which was randomly adhered to is not sustainable. We discussed a new tool that we have access to that analyzed our holdings as compared to other libraries. This tool allows us to expose items of lasting value and allow us to make strategic decisions about which items should have long term access. We can then make informed decisions as to how those items are then preserved and accessed.”

137. Question:

One point of the presentation (on March 27) was the potential cost of housing the “non-circulating” collection over a given time period. The \$500,000 figure was startlingly large and suspiciously round. Given that shelves and books are paid for; that the building has to be heated and cooled whether the books are present or not; and that the lights are zoned only to be turned on when someone is actively looking for a book, how was that figure computed? What costs were included? Who computed the \$500,000 figure? Was that number and its derivation presented to the Board for approval prior to the presentation?

Answer:

That amount is based on the cost of \$4.26 per book. That figure was derived from an academic study titled “On the Cost of Keeping a Book” by Paul N. Courant and Matthew “Buzzy” Nielsen.

The complete text for the study can be found at:
<http://www.clir.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/pub147.pdf>.

138. Question:

I would like a detailed explanation of why housing books that haven't circulated for a period of time would cost the library \$500,000.00.

Answer:

That amount is based on the cost of \$4.26 per book. That figure was derived from an academic study titled "On the Cost of Keeping a Book" by Paul N. Courant and Matthew "Buzzy" Nielsen. The complete text for the study can be found at:
<http://www.clir.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/pub147.pdf>.

139. Question:

Would you please explain how you came to the figure of how much it costs to keep one copy of every book?

Answer:

We determined the cost based on an average of \$4.26 per book. The academic study from which that figure was derived is "On the Cost of Keeping a Book" by Paul N. Courant and Matthew "Buzzy" Nielsen. The complete text for the study can be found at:
<http://www.clir.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/pub147.pdf>.

140. Question:

There is obvious overwhelming public support for the "Last Copy" practice. Will the Board formalize it into an official policy?

Answer:

It has not been official ACPL policy to keep the last copy of items. While the practice has been referred to in speeches given by a former Director, and there were some staff who supported the idea, it was never codified or followed consistently throughout the library system.

It is also not an idea the majority of branch managers and the main library support. The idea was discussed at the April 16, 2019 management meeting. The intended participants of the monthly management meeting are all managers throughout the system. The following is the conclusion from that meeting which was relayed to the Board:

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is not sustainable. We discussed a new tool that we have access to that analyzed our holdings as compared to other libraries. This tool allows us to expose items of lasting value and allow us to make strategic decisions about which items should have long term access. We can then make informed decisions as to how those items are then preserved and accessed.”

141. Question:

Was checking for last copies and not discarding books that were the last copies an OFFICIAL library policy or not? Who decided that ACPL would no longer check for last copies, when WHY, and under whose authority?

Answer:

It has not been official ACPL policy to keep the last copy of items. While the practice has been referred to in speeches given by a former Director, and there were some staff who supported the idea, it was never codified or followed consistently throughout the library system.

It is also not an idea the majority of branch managers and the main library support. The idea was discussed at the April 16, 2019 management meeting. The intended participants of the monthly management meeting are all managers throughout the system. The following is the conclusion from that meeting which was relayed to the Board:

“The suggestion was made at the management team meeting of incorporating last copy language to formalize the retention of a last copy. One manager was clearly in favor of this, a few branch managers thought that Main department managers where already doing this; however, Main managers (with the exception of one department who proposed the idea) said they were not in favor of this and that they currently were not retaining the last copy, nor did they want to do so in the future. This past practice which was randomly adhered to is not sustainable. We discussed a new tool that we have access to that analyzed our holdings as compared to other libraries. This tool allows us to expose items of lasting value and allow us to make strategic decisions about which items should have long term access. We can then make informed decisions as to how those items are then preserved and accessed.”

142. Question:

Does the Board agree with maintaining the commonly called “last copy policy?”

Answer:

It has not been official ACPL policy to keep the last copy of items. While the practice has been referred to in speeches given by a former Director, and there were some staff who supported the idea, it was never codified or followed consistently throughout the library system.

It is also not an idea the majority of branch managers and the main library support. The idea was discussed at the April 16, 2019 management meeting. The intended participants of the monthly management meeting are all managers throughout the system. The following is the conclusion from that meeting which was relayed to the Board:

“The suggestion was made at the management team meeting of incorporating last copy language to formalize the retention of a last copy. One manager was clearly in favor of this, a few branch managers thought that Main department managers were already doing this; however, Main managers (with the exception of one department who proposed the idea) said they were not in favor of this and that they currently were not retaining the last copy, nor did they want to do so in the future. This past practice which was randomly adhered to is not sustainable. We discussed a new tool that we have access to that analyzed our holdings as compared to other libraries. This tool allows us to expose items of lasting value and allow us to make strategic decisions about which items should have long term access. We can then make informed decisions as to how those items are then preserved and accessed.”

143. Question:

If all libraries in the interloan system had the same procedure of not keeping the last book, what would be the strength of the network?

Answer:

In an attempt to better understand the true value of items in our collection, the Library has recently purchased a tool that provides data on the value of items in our collection, based on rarity or monetary value. The data also tells us which libraries in our peer group do or do not have those items, as well as how many copies are or are not held by other libraries. This tool allows us to objectively determine the value of items in the collection. If an item is indeed valuable due to rarity or monetary value, it is taken out of circulation and retained in the Fine Book Room.

MISCELLANEOUS

144. Question:

Will the questions we emailed in response to the invitation made at the public meeting be submitted to the Trustees as written, including any comments; be submitted in summary form with like questions subsumed into one; or be submitted as questions only with comments redacted? Will the responses be sent to the individual questioner or published in some form for all to access? Will responses be prepared by the Board, by a staff member for Board review, or by someone else?

Answer:

All submissions to the Board via the Trustees@acpl.info email address have been submitted to Board members in PDF format. A copy of all responses will be sent to those who submitted questions. Copies also will be sent to local media and posted on www.acpl.info. The vast majority of the questions submitted relate to the inner workings of the Library. As a board we are charged with providing oversight and governance of the institution, but none of us are library professionals. Because of that reality, we rely on the input of library staff and subject matter experts to assist in developing responses to questions outside our personal experiences and range of knowledge.

145. Question:

Why did the library Board adopt a customer-centric approach?

Answer:

The Board is responsible for reviewing and approving policies that govern ACPL. Because there is not a specific policy related to the use of the term “customer”, the Board played no role in adopting a customer-centric approach.

146. Question:

How did the Board come to the conclusion that catering to short-term interests is the best way to serve the community in the long-term?

Answer:

The Board has come to no such conclusion. Instead, we consider long-term capacity as well as financial stewardship of taxpayer dollars. And, like every other library system across the country, we intend to remain relevant in today’s technology-driven society.

147. Question:

Does the Board view the library as an organization to meet needs that are not being met elsewhere, or as an organization that strives to compete with other organizations (book stores, music and video streaming services, online book sellers)?

Answer:

In reality, the Library does both. ACPL provides books, music, movies, art, concerts, programs, and much more. There are private-sector entities that do the same thing. The difference is that the Library's materials and programs are available free of charge. ACPL strives to reduce barriers to access.

148. Question:

What is the official mission statement of the library? If it is available online, where can it be found?

Answer:

The Library's mission is "Enriching the community through lifelong learning and discovery." It can be found on the Library's website: www.acpl.info in the "About ACPL" section.

149. Question:

Does the board intend to place the ACPL mission statement in a prominent, clearly labeled location on the ACPL website?

Answer:

The mission statement is currently on our website. And while the Board does not have oversight of Library communications, we do not anticipate Library leadership being opposed to making the mission statement more visible.

150. Question:

Is the library actively seeking to appear more relevant in order to secure a certain amount of taxpayer funding?

Answer:

ACPL is not seeking to appear more relevant due to funding concerns. The reality is that libraries across the country are facing the challenge of how to remain relevant in today's technology-centric society.

151. Question:

Does the library board have a specific, actionable plan and/or broader policy to avoid falling victim to Goodhart's Law? Or is there a non-zero possibility the library will pursue popularity and relevance at the expense of meeting community needs that are not met elsewhere?

Answer:

ACPL has adopted a strategic plan intended to guide the organization into the future and keep leadership and staff focused on areas that should be addressed. There is some duplication of services in terms of some of the materials and resources we provide as a library. We offer books, music, movies, art, concerts, programs, and much more. There are private-sector entities that do the same thing. The difference is that our materials and programs are available free of charge. We strive to reduce barriers to access.

152. Question:

How does the library board respond to the following assertion? "Libraries are storehouses of knowledge."

Answer:

According to at least one Trustee: "Public Libraries should also evolve to recognize desires of patrons, and their Community. Public Libraries should not become Museums."

153. Question:

How does the library board respond to the following assertion? "Storehouses of public knowledge are valuable because private individuals often have no interest or incentive to maintain rich, varied collections for themselves."

Answer:

The reality is that many individuals do build home libraries. What makes ACPL special is that the Library makes those same materials available to all residents of Allen County, and works to remove barriers to accessing said materials, programs and services.

154. Question:

How does the library board respond to the following assertion? "Libraries have an obligation to safeguard cultural heritage from disappearing."

Answer:

According to at least one Trustee: "Public Libraries should safeguard cultural heritage literature and media to the extent of available physical space while also considering the needs of the patrons and community it serves."

155. Question:

How does the library board respond to the following assertion: “A library that owns books that nobody in town owns is more valuable than a library that contains books that half the town also privately owns.”

Answer:

There is no effective measure for this philosophical statement. It is the library’s obligation to provide popular books - even those that might also be found in personal collections. Our goal is to make books available to all, including those who do not have the means to establish home libraries.

156. Question:

How does the library board respond to the following assertion: “A library has an obligation to maintain uncommon and infrequently-requested materials precisely because nobody else has an incentive to do so.”

Answer:

There is no effective measure for this philosophical statement. We are charged with determining what the appropriate amount of taxpayers’ dollars should be spent on materials. To spend precious taxpayer funds on books that are never circulated or used, is not in our estimation, being good stewards.

157. Question:

Does the ACPL board have any financial or political incentive whatsoever to increase library participation, including (but not limited to) an incentive to show that tax dollars are being “well spent” (as measured by library visitor/material checkout statistics) in order to secure future funds?

Answer:

Our only incentive for showing that tax dollars are being managed responsibly is the sense of obligation the Board and staff have toward our community. The library is a taxpayer-funded entity. As board members, employees, and fellow taxpayers, we appreciate the community’s financial support of our library system.

158. Question:

Is ACPL’s level of funding dependent directly or indirectly on any measurements the library reports, including but not limited to “number of visitors” or “number of checkouts?”

Answer:

No. The library is supported by tax income as defined in the Indiana Code.

159. Question:

Has the board of trustees reviewed the information offered to you by the concerned citizens yet? If not, when will you do so?

Answer:

According to at least one Trustee: “The Board has received all written and verbal comments. The Board has discussed all and will continue to work with Library Administration; and gauge ACPL Associates’ opinions”.

160. Question:

Does the Library’s Board of Trustees hold final decision-making power with regard to the Library’s Policies and Procedures or is that solely in the hands of the ACPL Director?

Answer:

The Board approves policy. Procedures are reviewed and approved by senior management. The following is a response from a Trustee: “We do need to emphasize our role in the library. The board as a body sets policy. We delegate the execution of that policy to our director, who by legal authority, must have a MLS degree. The director has the responsibility to implement our policy in conjunction with the entire staff. We have 105 staff members who are professionally educated librarians. Each will have a diverse viewpoint drawn from their differing experiences, but the objective is for each to be heard as they work with the director to implement the policies. Ultimately the Board sets those policies.”

161. Question:

Out of date information may be history likened to protect archaeology, will they be saved in our book collection and not perceived to be museum pieces out of place, use, or value?

Answer:

Some out of date information provides context. In other cases, out of date information is harmful. In an attempt to better understand the true value of items in our collection, and their role in providing context, the Library has recently purchased a tool that provides data on the value of items in our collection, based on rarity or monetary value. The data also tells us which libraries in our peer group do or do not have those items, as well as how many copies are or are not held by other libraries. This tool allows us to objectively determine the value of items in the collection. If an item is indeed valuable due to rarity or monetary value, it is taken out of circulation and retained in the Fine Book Room.

162. Question:

Will ALL concerning questions be posted as well as answers?

Answer:

All questions received prior to the April 3 deadline have been included and answered.

163. Question:

Will questions be grouped as we already answered something similar and may be disregarded?

Answer:

All questions received prior to the April 3 deadline have been included and answered.

164. Question:

Can we count on you NOT to be hasty?

Answer:

The Board and members of ACPL leadership have taken a very intentional approach to addressing concerns and creating a plan to move forward.

165. Question:

Can we count on you to clear this concern for as long as this board of trustees serve?

Answer:

Each member of the Board is invested in the long-term success of the Library and sustaining the important role it plays in our community.

166. Question:

Is the Library Board of Trustees elected by citizens or appointed by an administrator?

Answer:

Members of the Board of Trustees are appointed by local government entities: Allen County Council, Allen County Commissioners, Fort Wayne Community School, and the school districts of East Allen, Northwest Allen, and Southwest Allen.

167. Question:

If appointed and not elected like MOST Trustees Boards how can it be objective in decisions it makes?

Answer:

Because Trustees are appointed, they are more able to provide appropriate guidance and oversight without the constrictions of political expediency.

168. Question:

WHY are the branches micromanaged by elite administrators downtown? Including what books are sent to the branch to the temperature of the building, and needing to be registered to even attend story time with their children, and what is shared in local papers without each Librarian having much input on anything?

Answer:

ACPL is one system with fourteen locations. Branches are not micromanaged. In order to operate efficiently, processes and procedures are centralized and made consistent throughout the system.

Centralized ordering of materials saves money and promotes more efficient processing. It is common practice for organizations to have a staff member or department tasked with handling media and marketing. ACPL is no different. The Community Engagement department works with staff to promote programs and events.

Program registration is now common practice in library systems across the country for many reasons. First, it allows staff to better plan for programs based on anticipated attendance. Second, some locations regularly see attendance that exceeds available space for popular programs. Third, it allows staff to provide better customer service. There have been several instances in which programs have been canceled at the last minute due to staffing issues, weather, or in one case, a vehicle hitting a branch. If registration had been in place for those situations, staff would have been able to instantly notify registrants of the cancellations.

As far as the temperatures of the branches, there are hundreds of pieces of equipment across all buildings in the ACPL system that are monitored and partially automated by Trane Ensemble to control the climate to maximize customer comfort while efficiently managing energy usage. They are very complex systems and require a significant amount of HVAC knowledge to adjust, or serious damage to the equipment can occur, so the system is restricted to trained and authorized users.

169. Question:

What is the 10 year comprehensive plan for the library?

Answer:

Instead of using a 10-year plan, the Library is currently working with a multi-year strategic plan with specific focus areas and goals. Please see below.

Our Mission:
Enriching the community through lifelong learning and discovery.

Focus Areas	Goals	Outcomes	Investments
A Culture of Collaboration, Leadership, Learning	ACPL actively supports the community's value for promoting life-long learning, economic growth and overall quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ An employer that celebrates the contribution of individuals while fostering a sense of collaboration and sharing ➢ Increased opportunities for employees to learn ➢ Improved customer service to support lifelong learning, quality of life and economic growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve internal communications • Encourage staff innovation (thinking & action) • Broaden staff capabilities (capacity) • Increase diversity of ACPL workforce • Align resources with strategic direction • Hire for attitude, train for skill
Community Awareness and Engagement	To broaden ACPL's reach throughout the community through direct connections and strong community partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ ACPL is seen as the cornerstone partner and key collaborator by other community organizations and stakeholder groups ➢ A more diverse ACPL clientele ➢ Increased community awareness and satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore deeper, creative and mutually supportive engagement with existing and potential partners • Establish shared outcome achievement with all partners • Work with the Library Foundation/Friends to build a strong donor network • Assess and understand cultural differences and needs of Allen County residents, including new and immigrant/refugee populations, and seek to meet those needs • Increase awareness of library services through a variety of platforms including, but not limited to, social media, advertising and staff outreach and mobile service options
Library as Place	To create welcoming and easy-to-use environments at all locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Attractive, easy-to-use, flexible facilities and grounds that meet a variety of users' needs for working, learning and playing ➢ Increased efficiency ➢ Improved customer service ➢ Facilities seen as welcoming by all users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align hours and services with community need • Reduce barriers and increase ease of use of programs, services, collections, and internal and external spaces.
Innovative and Adaptable Content and Services	To provide meaningful, innovative, and adaptable content and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ A responsive organization that can adapt to ever-changing context and embraces opportunities to respond to community needs and wants ➢ Maximized impact of ACPL resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and enhance programming to support community need, with a focus on "intentional" programming • Assess, enhance and expand outreach services for all ages • Assess and enhance access to and use of the collection in all formats • Elevate the public experience for the Lincoln and other ACPL special collections • Maximize the virtual access experience

170. Question:

Why don't you send out another questionnaire to all of the Allen Co. library card holders and ask them what direction they want the library to go.

Answer:

There are no plans at this time to put forth another questionnaire or survey. The survey and public forums in 2017 were designed to inform the strategic planning process.

171. Question:

We really miss the monthly list of the new books coming out. WHY did you stop this? PLEASE start doing it again! If there are no plans to, then I want a response as to why not?

Answer:

The Library is instead offering a monthly publication that features new releases and articles on books and authors. The cost of providing the publication is markedly less than the cost of staff time to produce the monthly lists for each location.

172. Question:

Who chose those particular time frames (editor's note: refers to Collection HQ timelines for weeding items) and why is that different from the Main branch, who, according to Greta Southard is pulling items not circulated in 5-10 years.

Answer:

The current Collection HQ time frames were determined by the Collection Development Team. Once members of that team had been working together for approximately one year, they adjusted the parameters in place at that time in order to establish more consistency system wide. The current parameters are based upon material type (print books, DVDs, CDs, etc.) and the location of the item, based upon the location, building size, and circulation.

On May 7, 2019 public managers and senior management will once again meet to discuss parameters and what changes, if any, are need moving forward.

173. Question:

Would Greta also extend that invitation (to tour the Main Library) to the board and the public to tour some of the smaller branches where the bulk of their collection is now gone and where there are more empty shelves than full?

Answer:

The board and public are always welcome to visit branch locations. The invitation to tour Main was specific to claims that there is plentiful storage space available, when the reality is that there is not. However, since storage is located on the two lower-levels of the main library, which are not accessible to the public, Greta extended an invitation to the public to schedule tours.

174. Question:

Do you have any idea what it is like to see your library being stripped at an alarming rate of valuable material, most of it still relevant and in excellent shape? Can you imagine what it is like to have patrons ask for items that you had at one time but no longer carry? Can you feel the frustration of knowing new items are not replacing old items at any significant rate? And finally would you please try to imagine what it is like when the patrons ask you what is happening to their books and you have been instructed not to tell them?

Answer:

The Board appreciates the community's passion and concern for the Library. The Board and the Director acknowledge that there should have been better communication among the entire ACPL staff, and the Community regarding weeding efforts. According to the Public Services Manager, who supervises branch managers, as well as the Youth Services

Coordinator and the main library manager, staff was never told not to discuss weeding with customers.

The Public Services Manager and branch managers did discuss appropriate responses to give customers when questions were being asked about the empty shelves. Those responses or talking points included:

- Weeding is taking place to create new space for different uses needed by our customers or community
- The material that had been discarded was no longer being used, and we are making space for new materials.

175. Question:

Was the director hired for the purpose of making policy changes?

Answer:

The Director was hired to oversee the organization as a whole. It is within the scope of her authority to propose new and updated policies. It is then the responsibility of the Board to review and approve all Library policies.

The following is a response from a Trustee: “The library is not a static place and never has been. From its beginning, it has grown to serve the needs of all of Allen County and beyond – whether through our world renowned genealogy collection or in helping recent immigrants integrate into our society. We are one library system with 15 locations to serve our community. We are committed to providing services and resources, both at the locations and online as we move forward. We need to balance our resources and tax payer funds to properly serve this community and as a Board we welcome concerned and instructive input into determining that balance.”

176. Question:

How could this board allow such a treasured institution in our community reach the point of not being trusted and possibly respected by its users?

Answer:

While the Board recognizes and appreciates that there are individuals in our community who have concerns regarding the Library’s collection, we do not believe that the Library has lost the trust and respect of the community.

177. Question:

Can we let this standing slide away in the greater library community? In our community?

Answer:

The Board is confident that while there may be differences in philosophy between the various parties, everyone involved is invested in the Library and the important role it plays in

our community. Because of this, the Board is confident that those charged with running the organization will continue to work in the best interest of the Library and its collection.

178. Question:

Does the current director know ACPL's legacy, and was this person hired to maintain and enhance it or change it?

Answer:

The Director is aware of the Library's legacy and has great respect for it. However, each new Director faces unique challenges and needs within the Library and the community it serves. The Board believes that change is not mutually exclusive from maintaining and enhancing the role of the organization.

The following is a response from a Trustee: "The library is not a static place and never has been. From its beginning, it has grown to serve the needs of all of Allen County and beyond – whether through our world renowned genealogy collection or in helping recent immigrants integrate into our society. We are one library system with 15 locations to serve our community. We are committed to providing services and resources, both at the locations and online as we move forward. We need to balance our resources and tax payer funds to properly serve this community and as a Board we welcome concerned and instructive input into determining that balance."

179. Question:

Do the ACPL trustees plan to maintain the legacy and collection of the ACPL?

Answer:

The Board is confident that while there may be differences in philosophy between the various parties, everyone involved is invested in the Library and the important role it plays in our community. Because of this, the Board is confident that those charged with running the organization will continue to work in the best interest of the Library and its collection.

180. Question:

Why was I forced to show proof of my age to check out a book after many years of library use?

Answer:

Years ago, ACPL did not require birth dates be recorded in the customer's record. However, the Circulation Policy states "The library will lend certain items only to persons 18 years of age or older." Because of this language in the policy, as the system has undertaken a "cleanup" of its database, those accounts lacking a DOB have been marked. Verifying the DOB is a one-time occurrence for the customer, and allows ACPL to have accurate records, and additionally helps prevent multiple accounts for one person.

181. Question:

Will ACPL return to the practices used under the previous director?

Answer:

While previous directors made valuable contributions to the organization during their tenures, the business of running a library continues to change and evolve. This is due to new technology introduced into the field, organizational priorities, and the changing needs of the community. To most effectively serve customers and remain relevant in the life of the community it serves, ACPL as an organization must be forward-thinking and moving.

The following is a response from a Trustee: “The library is not a static place and never has been. From its beginning, it has grown to serve the needs of all of Allen County and beyond – whether through our world renowned genealogy collection or in helping recent immigrants integrate into our society. We are one library system with 15 locations to serve our community. We are committed to providing services and resources, both at the locations and online as we move forward. We need to balance our resources and tax payer funds to properly serve this community and as a Board we welcome concerned and instructive input into determining that balance.”

182. Question:

Does the Board see the Main Library building as just one other branch of the ACPL library system or do they see it as the center-piece of the library system? Is the Main Library – just like all the other neighborhood library branches or was the downtown building, which was built after tax-payers approved a bond petition, intended to contain all a branch library might have PLUS far more, including the professional staff necessary to assist patrons in finding and locating the wealth of knowledge and information which was intended to be housed within the Main library building? Would the Board please define what you see as the Main Library’s role within the system?

Answer:

The roles of the Main Library and the branches are clearly defined in the Collection Development Policy.

“The main library serves the Allen County community as a whole, in addition to serving as a resource for the branch libraries. The main library places major emphasis on the provision of information regardless of format. It offers a strong nonfiction collection that supports the general information and independent study needs of Allen County residents. A broad choice of circulating print and non-print materials is selected to accommodate the diversity of tastes, reading levels, and interests of users of all ages.

The branch libraries serve neighborhoods and specific communities in Allen County...While the branch collection serves the basic information needs of its neighborhood, it does not duplicate the in-depth resources or special collections of the main library.”

183. Question:

Has the Board of Trustees reached out and accepted the help of Steve Fortriede, the retired associate director of the ACPL?

Answer:

No. Please see an earlier response to the measuring of the current collection, found in the Weeding section of this document.

184. Question:

Has the Board talked to people like Eric Fry from Huntington Public Library, who talked about his experience last week at the public meeting? Or how about the retired director, Jeff Krull, to ask his perspective as someone knowledgeable of the system but now using it as a patron?

Answer:

No. The comments made by Mr. Fry and Mr. Krull have been considered along with all members of the community.

185. Question:

Did you see the “survey” that the Director continues to use as her reasoning for needing more space for meeting areas at the expense of having shelves containing books?

Answer:

The Board did see the survey. The Director kept the board informed throughout the strategic planning process, encouraged Board participation in surveys and forums, and consultants assisting with the process updated the Board on several occasions. Board members personally participated as time and availability allowed,

186. Question:

Why is it that prior to her leadership, the system was able to do all of these things, offer programs, meeting rooms and still maintain a world-class book collection?

Answer:

Prior to the strategic planning process in 2017, ACPL had not actively solicited feedback from the public on Library services since the capital improvement campaign in 2001. In the almost two decades since, much has changed about how the community uses the Library’s collection and spaces.

In some branches, circulation rates have dropped by almost half in the last decade. In other locations, due to shifting population patterns, the circulation rate has increased. In both types of branches, what is constant is that whether or not the community is checking out books, it is definitely using Library spaces. Shifting the collection, determining how to add

more spaces for programs, study, and collaboration is simply a response to community needs.

187. Question:

Is the Board continuing to just believe the Director's word for everything as being absolute truth and just accepting that all the rumblings they are hearing have no merit OR has the volume of reactions you have experienced started you questioning if there might indeed be something amiss in what you are hearing from the Director and her administration and what is really happening to our library system at her direction?

Answer:

The Board and the Director have worked together to determine the root cause of the reaction among some concerned citizens. The Board has talked with members of the public and Library staff. The Director and her management team have examined procedures and how they were communicated. We are confident that by working together, the Library can more effectively communicate and address areas of concern going forward.

188. Question:

Why are patrons now referred to as "customers?"

Answer:

There was never an official, codified shift to using the term "customer." The preferred use of the word most likely came about because (1) that was the term used at the Director's former location, and had been prior to her tenure there; (2) all staff underwent a comprehensive training on customer service and how to better serve both internal and external customers. Using the term customer is a sign of respect for the public who supports the system through their tax dollars.

189. Question:

Is the board truly aware of what is happening with the library or is the board continuing to believe and take the Director at her word?

Answer:

According to at least one Trustee: "Yes, this has been addressed by entire Board."

190. Question:

Though we may have failed to attend public meetings in the past few years when recent changes were made, now that we are finally aware that the ACPL director is planning to make, or already has made, massive changes which we are not confident in or at times in favor of, what do you feel your responsibility is to us going forward?

Answer:

For the Board and the Library's leadership, the most important lesson we have taken away from the current conversation is the importance of increased communication to both internal and external audiences.

191. Question:

Will you re-survey the public, making sure that the survey is given to all ACPL patrons so they can respond on paper or in electronic form easily, with surveying including asking how much they value the ACPL collection being a certain size?

Answer:

There are no plans at this time to re-survey the public. The previous survey was taken in conjunction with the strategic planning process. It was never designed to inform the Board or library leadership on the size of the collection.

192. Question:

If you and the library management want to put us as library users first, we ask that you notify the public well in advance of these types of changes being made, so that we can have our voices hear. Are you willing to do that for us?

Answer:

For the Board and the Library's leadership, the most important lesson we have taken away from the current conversation is the importance of increased communication to both internal and external audiences.

193. Question:

Referring to library users as "customers" rather than as "patrons" is undoubtedly a major shift in the way you choose to related to your community. Please tell us, your tax-paying public, exactly WHEN (day, month, year) and WHY (in a philosophical sense) this change was made. Did you (the board/trustees) make the change, or was it all Ms. Southard's doing? Did you actually agree to this change?!

Answer:

There was never an official, codified shift to using the term "customer." The preferred use of the word most likely came about because (1) that was the term used at the Director's former location, and had been prior to her tenure there; (2) all staff underwent a comprehensive training on customer service and how to better serve both internal and external customers.

Using the term customer is a sign of respect for the public who supports the system through their tax dollars.

194. Question:

How many different people turned in questions to the board?

Answer:

47 individuals submitted questions to the Trustees@acpl.info email address during the period of March 14 – April 3, 2019. In addition to that, six questions were asked at the March 27, 2019 public meeting.

195. Question:

What was the most commonly asked question?

Answer:

The questions covered a wide range of topics. The most common category would be related to ACPL staff.

196. Question:

Who specifically is answering these questions?

Answer:

The vast majority of the questions submitted relate to the inner workings of the Library. As a board we are charged with providing oversight and governance of the institution. None of us are library professionals. Because of that reality, we rely on the input of library staff and subject matter experts to assist in developing responses to questions outside our personal experiences and range of knowledge.

197. Question:

Is anyone from the board reading these questions? If so, who?

Answer:

All questions and comments submitted to the Board are sent to each Trustee in PDF format.

198. Question:

At the public meeting, why were all the questions answered by an attorney rather than a member of the board?

Answer:

The executive committee of the Board determined in advance that it would be best for Trustees to fully focus on the community's questions and concerns at the event. Our attorney responded so that we could listen.

199. Question:

Why were there no new questions answered on the night of the public meeting? Why do all questions have to be submitted in advance?

Answer:

The vast majority of the questions submitted relate to the inner workings of the Library. As board members, we are aware that while we are charged with providing oversight and governance of the institution, we ourselves are not library professionals. The Board's goal throughout this process has been to provide thoughtful, accurate responses. Because of that, the Board has relied on the input of library staff and subject matter experts to assist in developing responses to questions outside our personal experiences and range of knowledge.

200. Question:

Will the board hire an outside party to aid in this investigation? One who will speak to frontline staff and give vital, and up until now, missing evidence to corroborate or refute the mass purging of books and the change to the management of the collection?

Answer:

The Director has previously introduced the idea of hiring an external consultant to review the Library's procedures and policies related to collection management. The idea is still under discussion.